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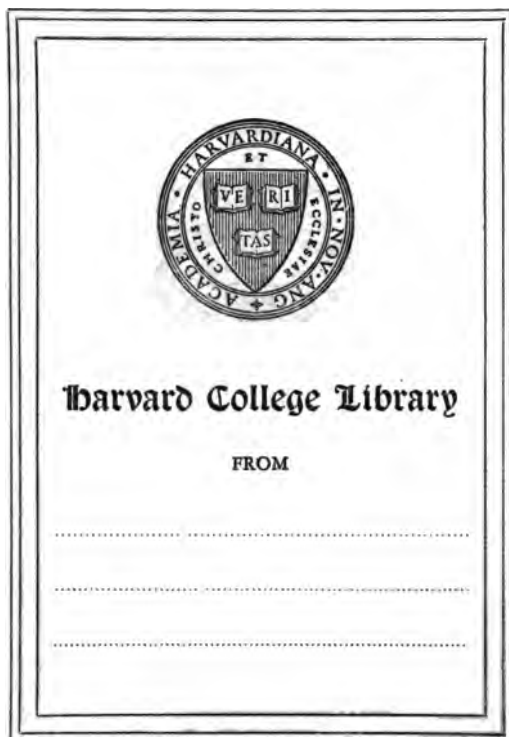


THE HOME NEEDLE

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THE HOME NEEDLE.

BY

ELLA RODMAN CHURCH,

AUTHOR OF

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NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.

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P R E F A C E.

OF books on embroidery and fancy-work, and all kinds of home decoration, there is no lack, and very charming and suggestive these dainty volumes are; but the humbler occupations of plain sewing and useful needle-work are too much neglected.

In a "Home Series," at least, these topics should have a place; and the making of garments at home, as well as the many other practical uses to which that essentially feminine implement—the needle—can be put, is a subject that interests all women, except, perhaps, the favored few whose pathway lies among the velvets and roses of life, and whose only use of the marvelous little instrument is when it is threaded with embroidery-silk.

For purposes of economy, and even of money-making, a deft use of the needle is a power not to be despised; and the encomium, "She can make anything that *is* to be made," applied to a skillful needle-woman, is of itself a liberal endowment. The suggestions

in this little volume are intended for those who desire a practical knowledge of plain sewing, millinery, and dress-making, who may find in the hints here offered a safe guide to experimental knowledge.

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THE HOME NEEDLE.

I.

“GO TEACH THE ORPHAN-GIRL TO SEW.”

It is not at all probable that the lady who received this very practical exhortation knew anything about sewing ; and, in this respect at least, there are many who resemble the proud daughter of a hundred earls.

The sewing-machine, though undoubtedly a great gain as a labor-saving invention, has much of this to answer for. Like a willing servant, more is expected of it than it is able to perform. “Just run it up on the machine” is a direction that does not apply with equally good results to all kinds of sewing ; and the habit is apt to produce a careless style of working. Then, too, the finishing off of work after the machine has done its duty is quite an important item ; the working of button-holes is no trifle ; and even preparing the garments to be stitched requires neatness, regularity, and dispatch.

Work that is too hastily done is never well done ; and the *tearing* manner in which some people attack a piece of sewing promises an abundant harvest of broken needles, snapped threads, and drawn and twisted seams, in lieu of the garments made by steam, which is their apparent aim.

Such workers will destroy nearly a paper of needles of an afternoon, sow pins broadcast over the floor, and make seams and hems that fray out for want of sufficient "edge." For, to do any work well, requires time; and seamstresses who twitch and jerk their thread, with an assumed superiority over more careful workers, rarely accomplish anything worth the doing.

In teaching the orphan-girl to sew—the average one at least, who frequents the Saturday sewing-school—it will invariably be found that she pins her work to her knee, and pulls and stretches the seam, with the laudable desire of reaching the end as soon as possible. The idea of running or hemming while holding the work in her hands is to her mind an innovation which she is very slow to adopt. Yet so many people do their work in the wrong way, and teach others as they do it themselves, that this is not to be wondered at.

It is better, however, to make the orphan understand at once that pinning the work to her knee is bad both for the work and for herself, as it bends the back and chest in a most injurious way for a growing girl. The proper way to hold the work is *on a line with the chest*; and the stitches should never be drawn, but lie easily when finished. Rolling the work around the finger is another fault with pupils, who should be taught to hold it properly between the thumb and forefinger. To prevent the side of a seam next to the worker from drawing up, and thus becoming shorter than the other, it should be gently stretched from time to time.

The first requisite for good sewing is good implements. A great many respectable people never have a decent pair of scissors: dull points, uneven edges, and even rusty blades, prevail to such a degree, that one would suppose this very necessary appendage to an ordinary needle-woman to be a foreign article of luxury unattainable except by the

wealthy. Yet, an excellent pair of scissors can be purchased for seventy-five cents, and even for less than that. It is a great convenience, where much sewing is done, to have scissors of different sizes : a large pair for cutting out work, a medium size for ordinary use, a small one for fine sewing and embroidery, and regular button-hole scissors for that especial department.

The character of the needles employed is equally important ; and people who go through life with poor scissors are apt to be equally lacking in regard to needles. Rusty needles, bent needles, blunt-pointed needles, stumpy needles—all are to be found in their possession ; but the only needles that are fit to use—long, slender, and elegant, glittering with the keenness of best-tempered steel, and fine-pointed, like the almost imperceptible satire—never.

Millward's sharps answer these requirements most satisfactorily, and from 5 to 10 is a sufficiently comprehensive range for ordinary work—5 being suitable for darning-cotton, and 10 for fine muslin. A needle that is too large or too fine for the thread will entirely spoil the appearance of the work ; and, while 7 and 8 are more in demand than any other numbers for shirting muslin, with numbers from 30 to 40 of Clark's spool-cotton, the coarser and finer ones are graded accordingly.

Some workers will break *any* needles—these are of the kind who pride themselves on “knocking off work in no time”—and it lasts about as long ; but, if a needle is too highly tempered, it will break with the most careful worker. On the other hand, those which bend easily without breaking and stay bent are not sufficiently tempered. A complete assortment of good needles, in a neat and commodious needle-book, is an indispensable aid to the accomplishment of satisfactory work.

Sewing-cotton should be “of equal texture to the thread of the material it is intended to work upon, except in the

case of stitching (back-stitching ?), when a coarser cotton can be used. The choice of thread merits great consideration, because upon the strength of the thread or silk the solidity of the work depends. In order to judge the strength of the thread to be used, it is well to try and break a needleful. The stronger it is the greater will be its resistance before it breaks. It ought to be sound and equal, without being too twisted ; it should, however, be twisted sufficiently to form a sharp point, and to wear well when passing constantly through the stuff. For the same reason, care must be taken not to use too long a needleful. The thread ought always to be *cut*, and never *broken off*."

A thimble with a poor sewer is usually lost or mislaid ; and, when found, it is apt to be of the cheapest material, and battered in at the side. A thimble should fit the finger closely, without pinching it ; and if a *souvenir* of gold, with the owner's monogram or initials prettily engraved upon it, the sewing will be none the worse for it, and the thimble will last all the longer.

A work-table, with a good-sized drawer divided into compartments for holding the various trimmings in ordinary use, is almost indispensable in a sewing-room ; but, where it can not be had, a large box, divided in the same way by pieces of pasteboard, will answer very well. Here should always be found a stock of needles, cotton, sewing-silk, pins, tapes, buttons, cord, hooks and eyes, and all the innumerable odds and ends so constantly used in household sewing, that no time may be lost by almost daily going or sending for one or other of these small necessities. A lady who was in the habit of sending her one servant from the wash-tub to buy her a spool of cotton or a piece of braid often wondered why the work of the house did not get on better.

The sewing-machine, when well constructed and well managed, and kept to its proper duties, is a valuable aid in

lightening the sewing of a household ; but this style of work is mechanical in its execution, and done according to rules that have little connection with needle-work. Some fastidious persons, who are able to indulge their tastes, prefer paying high prices for hand needle-work ; and, with the one exception of stitching (which includes tucking), hand needle-work is undoubtedly the best.

Mechanical sewing, too, is apt to make the worker careless and slovenly in regard to the *finish* of things. She loses all patience with the slow ways of the needle ; and, if the orphan who is to be taught to sew is put at the sewing-machine for that purpose, she is quite as much spoiled for deft needle-work as though she had been sent to a factory.

Children seldom achieve greatness, in the way of sewing, unless it is thrust upon them ; few take to it naturally, and a child's definition of a needle would probably be, "Something to prick one's fingers with." It always seems pitiful to the tender-hearted to see a poor, little, chubby prisoner, painfully dragging along the slow length of an endless seam ; or "picking out," with tearful eyes, the dreadful, gaping stitches in that ugly bit of patch-work.

According to her nature, Duncinella throws her work down on the floor and stamps on it, or she weeps hopelessly over the impossible task—quite sure that she never can accomplish it, unless some good fairy comes to her assistance. Poor little mite ! the dragon who has her in charge—often the mildest of mammas or the most painstaking of aunts—seems utterly unimpressible ; and, when the unwilling pupil is told by way of encouragement that mamma or auntie had to learn to sew just in the same way "when *she* was a little girl like you," it sounds to her like the history of the world before the Flood.

That sewing-hour is a dreaded ordeal both to pupil and

teacher—especially if the child is a natural romper, who hates to sit still, and on whose unheeding ears the expostulation of “*Eight years old, and can’t hem a dish-cloth!*” makes not the slightest impression. But the fault is in the dish-cloth—she should not have it to hem.

Few people can discover any actual beauty in that useful kitchen appendage; and even grown persons find work irksome that offers neither variety nor brightness of coloring. How heartless it seems, then, to chain down a little, restless child to an uncongenial task! First lessons in sewing should always be given upon some bright-colored fabric, with as great a variety of pieces as possible—a little history attached to each piece is sure to interest the diminutive pupil; and the making of some article, however small or useless, the employment of means to an end, infuses an element of hope into the work that is totally wanting when the task consists of endless hemming or equally endless patchwork.

It is a mistake to suppose that children are devoted to patchwork, for this is a passion that comes much later in life; and the most interesting as well as instructive use to which their first mastery of the needle can be put is in the manufacture of dolls’ clothes. “To make something for mamma,” is another strong incentive; and a promised reward, if the sewing on some given article is well done, goes a great way with the little seamstress. A pretty silver thimble, or a little work-box or bag, “for her very own,” will seem a prize worth striving for. Let the grown people hem the dish-cloths.

To be permitted to make a pink, blue, or red calico apron, and afterward to possess this treasure, was an incentive to careful sewing in a mission-school; and the progress made under the influence of this spur was really astonishing.

Another wise teacher of little folk, to whom the wear-

ing of calico aprons would have been a hardship instead of a pleasure, contrived to interest them in plain sewing, by holding out the reward of instruction in fancy-work for good scholarship in over-casting and back-stitching. One afternoon a week was given to the ordinary use of needle and thread ; and one for knitting, crocheting, and the simpler kinds of embroidery. Miss H——'s graduates knew how to sew ; and those who are now guiding their children's first efforts in this direction, recall with vivid pleasure their own enthusiastic delight, in those early days, over a new stitch in knitting or embroidery.

A plan for teaching children to do their work evenly is to have some square pieces of white muslin cloth of different qualities, made into a small book, upon the leaves of which they can practice various stitches ; colored cotton for working being preferable to white, because it makes the work plainer, and mistakes are more easily seen.

The stitches given in the illustrations are as follows (see Fig. 1) :

SLIP OR RUNNING STITCH, A.—This is done by constantly running the needle into the material in front of the stitch just formed, and when the quality of the stuff permits. Several stitches may be taken on the needle at the same time before drawing the cotton through.

ENGLISH STITCH, B.—For this, the needle is inserted in an upward direction on the cross, for which reason it is much stronger than any other.

BACK-STITCH, C.—This is done in two ways—first, going from *right* to the left, the needle stitched into the work behind where it has been drawn out, in order to take a stitch of the same size in front. Passing from *left* to right, the needle is inserted in front of the stitch last formed. Proceeding thus causes the stitch to appear on the reverse side as shown at A. For this reason, it is frequently used for turned-down seams.

STEM-STITCH, D.—This is a sort of back-stitch in which the stitches overlap, as seen in the illustration. It is taken

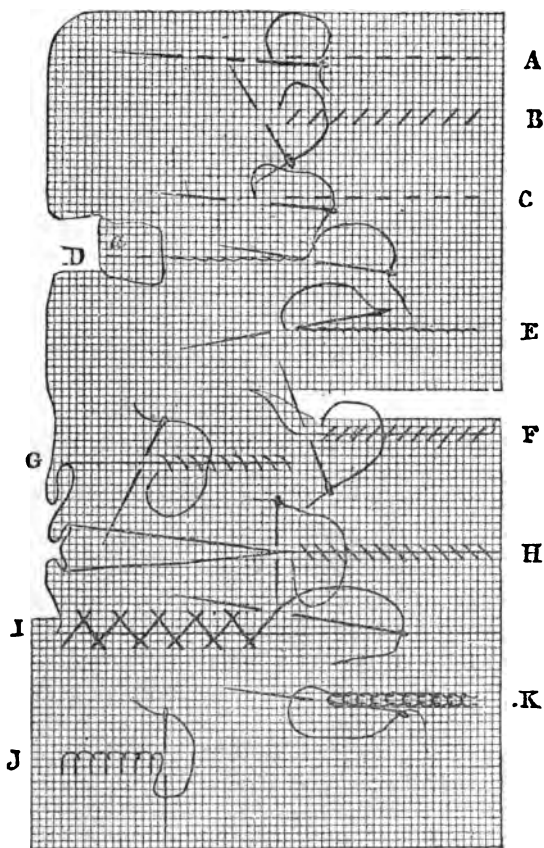


FIG. 1.

from left to right, and forms a neat finish for the right side of a hem.

STITCHING, E.—This is composed of a row of back-stitches without any interval between them—the needle being at once inserted backward into the stitch just made, to be drawn out at an equal distance in front of the stitch which has to be formed.

HEM-STITCH, F.—This stitch is employed to fit a hem in any stuff, the needle to be placed under the material, and drawn out about two threads above the edge.

SIDE-STITCH, G.—By the help of this stitch the folds, or rather the folded edges, of two pieces of stuff are joined ; the stitch is made slantingly in the opposite side to that which is held toward the worker.

SEWING-STITCH, H.—This is employed to join two edges of material. The needle, directed *over* the edges, stitches through the outer fold, and comes under that which is held nearest the worker. A depth of some threads must be observed. This stitch is always required to join the two selvages of calico or other cloth, and is familiarly called *sewing a seam*.

HERRING-BONE OR CROSS-STITCH, I.—This is used to join two edges of material which, instead of being folded together, are laid one over the other and worked from left to right, making alternately a stitch below and one above. The cross-stitch is made by the thread being drawn out each time above the stitch which has just been done. This stitch is used particularly for making flannel garments.

BUTTON-HOLE STITCH, J, and
Fig. 2.—A straight slit having been cut for the button-hole (and it is

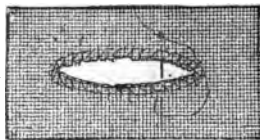


FIG. 2.

of advantage in order to strengthen the work to run two threads, one below and one above the hole), the stitches are taken from left to right in the slit of the button-hole, to be drawn out behind the tracing at the upper end,

making the thread form a species of knot. This is done either by holding it with the thumb below the needle, or in casting it upward; the thread is drawn out gently toward the slit upon the edges of which the knots ought to be formed.

It is of importance to remember, when making button-holes, to place some stitches across each end of the hole, to give it a nice appearance, and also to insure its wearing well. In needle-work, nothing is more difficult than to make a button-hole properly, especially in stuffs of all kinds, it being easier to form them in linen or calico than in any other material. There is a difference in the appearance of the back and front of the button-hole. This stitch is also used for making eyelet-holes. The eyelet is a round hole pierced with a stiletto. It is prepared for working in the same manner as the button-hole, having a thread run round below and above the hole in order to strengthen the work and to guide the stitch.

CHAIN-STITCH, K.—The needle is held straight, and always placed in the last ring or stitch, to be drawn out at an equal distance to the length of the following ring; the cotton is to be held below the needle.

SEAMS are formed by the various stitches explained above, and may be called simple or double. A simple seam is that which is finished at once—for example, the hem of a handkerchief or of any garment. Double seams and over-sewing exact double work. The former are frequently made with two sorts of stitches, such as turned-down seams, those turned up, those flattened out, etc.

A turned-down seam is used when it is desired to give extra finish to any work. Two pieces of material are joined so that one side is higher than the other. One side of the seam is made either by “English stitch,” B, or by the running-stitch, A. When this is done, the material is unfolded, so as to flatten out the sewing; then the longer side

is turned down in a tiny fold and hemmed. These seams, which are as much flattened as possible, are made, with few exceptions, very narrow.

A TURNED-UP OR FRENCH SEAM.—This is used in fine linen and light stuffs. Two pieces of material are joined together near the edge. A running or slip stitch is used. When the seam is finished, the work is turned so as to make a similar seam at the back and close to the first. These seams are often employed for the bodies of habit-shirts, sleeves, etc.

FLATTENED SEAMS.—These are employed in making the seams of garments. After the two pieces of stuff are joined, whether by a simple running or by a back-stitch (the latter is far better for making bodices, etc.), they are opened and laid upon an ironing-board, and a hot iron is passed quickly over them. In the case of a thin material, this process greatly improves the appearance of the work. When this is done, the edges of the seams are fixed to the garment in question in various ways. It is best to use a cross-stitch, or to run them down, taking care, however, that the stitches do not go through to the right side of the article. The seams of shirts, chemises, and under-linen, unless they are sewed together, that is, overhanded, are made by simply running up the widths, and hemming or "felling" them down.

A DOUBLE HEM, OR HEMMED SEAM, is employed to join pieces of material of moderate thickness, folding them down together, and at once hemming the seam, dispensing with any other stitch.

ROLLED HEM.—This is made in fine linen, light stuffs, etc. This hem is prepared as required—that is to say, by rolling the edge of the material between the fingers while sewing.

WHIPPED SCROLL.—This is prepared like the foregoing hem ; the difference exists in working the needle over the

edge so as to take several stitches at the same time. This whipping is generally used to make tiny frills, as the thread, if taken loosely, can be *drawn up* to form a gathering. Gathering proper is formed by a running-stitch, A. These stitches for running can not be too regularly made, but are larger or smaller according to the thickness of the material. Only one needleful of thread is used to make a gathering. This is never broken off until the running is finished. This work exacts a certain amount of skill, because, while making the needle run in front, the back-stitches are thrown off as they amass themselves.

When the gathering is of requisite length, it is firmly fastened off at the end. This must be carefully seen to, as few things are more irritating than for the thread to run back and all the work to come undone. The running must be graduated, it being above all necessary to equalize the gathering. This is done by taking a strong needle or pin and stroking down each plait of the gathering separately, so that it is all equally divided.

II.

BEGINNING RIGHT.—UNDER-GARMENTS.

To cut out the materials for garments in an exact and careful manner requires good judgment, a steady hand, and proper conveniences. The cook who in instructing a younger sister charged her "always to have a good fire to begin with," understood her business; but those workers who do their cutting out on uneven surfaces, on their laps, or on the floor, have not yet mastered the rudiments of needle-work.

Nothing can be well done except in the right way; and an inequality in the two sides of a joining, the redundant side being slightly puckered, or the lacking one pulled "to make it come right," or an irregular bias, will spoil the entire appearance of a garment.

A single-bed, that can be approached from both sides, or a dining-table, will answer very nicely for large pieces of work; but for ordinary garments nothing is so convenient as the low table, folding or adjustable, at which the wearied worker can sit comfortably. A lap-board is the next best thing; but one or the other is indispensable where patterns are to be laid down smoothly and carefully followed.

Having made sure that the material is placed to run the right way, the pattern should be laid on it and carefully secured from slipping even a hair's breadth, by slender pins. The best pins for white goods, silk, and thin stuffs are nee-

dles with sealing-wax heads, as these leave no marks of their presence ; but for woollen goods, cloth, etc., ordinary pins are more substantial. It is better to arrange the different parts of a pattern on the goods before using the scissors, as the material is then cut to better advantage ; and, if a number of garments are cut out at once, there will be quite a saving of cloth.

Careless workers and people who “work by steam” are always wasteful of material, while fashionable dress-makers are proverbial for “never turning a pattern.” But a great deal may be gained in valuable material by changing the arrangement of a pattern until it fits almost as closely as a puzzle—although the example of the frugal lady who spent her time over a chemise composed of sixty small pieces of shilling muslin is not to be recommended for general imitation.

Patterns should always be cut to allow for seams, as, besides preventing mistakes, this insures a better fit and more harmonious joining of the different parts.

For children in sewing-schools, etc., the first actual garment which they are permitted to make is usually an apron of the simplest kind. This involves very little cutting out—the material, which is calico or gingham, being torn off of the proper length—and it is finished with a band and strings at the waist. A child’s apron often has a bib attached ; or the garment is cut out in sacque-shape, with or without sleeves, and buttoned up in the back.

The making of the simplest kind of apron will teach a beginner to run up seams, overcast, hem, gather, etc. ; while the more complicated ones include the making of button-holes, sewing on of buttons, and facing.

A lady’s apron for use, instead of ornament, should be of substantial size ; and gray or white linen, although muslin may be used, will be found the best material. A kitchen apron can scarcely be too wide ; if made without gathers,

two breadths of wide linen will answer—one breadth being cut into two narrow ones, which are joined one on either side of the wide one. Such aprons should always have bibs or waists, in order to protect the dress as much as possible; and a quarter of a yard extra of material will make three or four bibs, according to the width. These are cut straight across the top, and slope at each side to the waist. These bibs are either hemmed or faced round—the smaller part joined to the apron at the waist, and the upper part pinned at each end to the dress.

Patterns for all kinds of aprons are so easily obtained, with the amount of material required marked on them, that it is scarcely safe to give an estimate of yards, as this varies with the style of apron and the size of the wearer. A plain, straight apron of *calico*, to cover the dress well and tie around the waist—the fullness at the top being gathered into a band—will take three yards; with a bib attached, a quarter of a yard more.

Aprons of gray linen cut in some pretty shape (which need not interfere with their usefulness), and trimmed with worsted feather-stitching in red or blue, can be made quite ornamental. They should have a pocket on either side.

A sewing-apron is very convenient when made of extra length to allow of the turning up of a quarter of a yard or so for a pocket. In this case, the bottom of the apron should be hemmed on the right side, and also as much of each side as is to be turned up. The ends of the pocket thus formed have their two sides joined by an overhand seam; and the pocket may be divided into two compartments by a row of stitching down the middle. Thread, worsted, embroidery silk, and the various small paraphernalia of sewing, can all be carried in this convenient receptacle, which prevents much tiresome searching for the thimble, scissors, and thread, that are so apt to go astray when the worker is called off for a moment.

The cutting out of a chemise was, some years ago, an intricate and mysterious proceeding because of "gores" and "gussets." But modern progress has changed all that ; gussets are things of the past ; and with wide French muslin, or our own American products, gores in this age of narrow skirts are well-nigh discarded.

Stout people, however, still require them, as a garment that forbids any but the most circumspect movement of the limbs is an uncomfortable affair. It will be seen by the illustration (Fig. 3) how much a gore on each side adds



FIG. 3.

to the width of a chemise ; and Fig. 4 shows the shape and comparative size of the gore.

A gore has always one straight side, being cut from the selvage edge of the material ; and this is joined by a fine overhand seam to the corresponding edge of the garment, the wide end being at the bottom and the narrow or pointed end at the top. In the illustration, the gores are cut from each side of the chemise ; and in this way the garment is prevented from being too wide at the top and not wide enough at the bottom.

The directions for cutting these gores are : first, to mark with pins the width required for the neck—about five inches representing the width of the gore at its base, *e* ; from this the material must be cut bias and narrowed to a point toward the middle of the chemise, or the outside edge of the muslin. For a beginner, it will be safer, before cutting, to crease the material just where the scissors are to go. After these first gores are cut—two being cut at the same time, one from the back-width and one from the front—the others are cut in the same manner from the other side of the chemise, and all are then joined by the selvage to their proper sides.



FIG. 4.

This method of cutting forms gores that reach only about half the length of the chemise, and makes the top of the garment quite narrow in proportion to the width of the bottom.

Another plan is to put gores on one side only, using two instead of four ; and this answers admirably with wide material. These gores, one for the back-width and one for the front, are larger than when taken from both sides ; and they are sewed to the opposite sides from which they have been taken. After sewing them on by the selvage, the gores (as in all other cases) are closed at the sides by running and felling the seam. For felling, one edge of the

seam is left wider than the other, and this longer edge is neatly turned under with the needle and hemmed down.

A quick and lazy way of making a chemise (when elegance is not required) is the bag method in Fig. 5. After cutting off whatever amount of material is required for sleeves and other things, that intended for the chemise is folded into three parts (*a*, *b*, *c*), so that two ends meet in the middle of the piece. The sides are then sewed togeth-

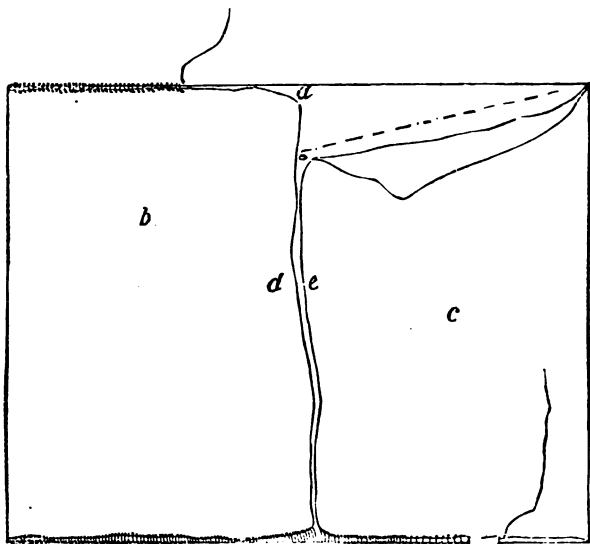


FIG. 5.

er; and this forms a double bag with two ends (*d* and *e*). The gores are cut from each side of this bag near the sewing, so that the straight ends of each of them meet in the middle of the under portion of the bag. The edges of the opening of the bag are the lower ends of the chemise, which lie exactly on the center of the material, that center being the top of the chemise.

It is from the lower portion of the chemise that the gores are cut—taken, as usual, from the width remaining after the size of the shoulders has been arranged. Fig. 4 shows one gore, which serves as a sample of all. When the gores are all cut, the bag is unfolded ; and the gores are found to be sewed up. It only remains to finish the chemise according to one of the ways described further on. The chemise is closed at each side by a seam run and felled from the slope ; and the bottom is finished with a hem, which varies from one inch to two and a half according to taste.

A general rule for the neck of a chemise is to slope it at least an inch in the middle of the front, and to put a little more fullness in the front than in the back. A band straight at the top, and cut down into sleeve-gussets on the lower side, is neatly stitched on after the neck of the chemise has been gathered and “stroked.” A needle of good size is a neater implement than a pin for this stroking—the gathering having been previously done on one or two threads, taking up and skipping alternately. The band is sewed first on the right side, using the English stitch and taking up a gather with each one, and then basted carefully down and done in the same way on the wrong side.

A slit of some inches is often made in the front of the chemise, and it is then necessary to finish the band with a button and button-hole, or with two button-holes, one at each end, to accommodate a stud. Sometimes, this slit is finished merely with a hem, the side that laps over being considerably wider than the other, and sometimes a piece of inserting is laid over it and trimmed around with lace. It is quite optional to have the slit at all ; and it is less trouble to leave the chemise closed and define the front by tucks and inserting.

For sleeves there are various styles ; but all should be short and cut to wear well. The puffed sleeve and the

“dollar” sleeve are great favorites, as they both look and wear well, the latter being the more simple of the two. To cut this, double, down the length, a piece of muslin or linen about thirteen inches long and ten wide ; then cut a round hole for the bottom of the sleeve, leaving six inches at the lower end on which comes the strain of the arm. Begin at this end on the other side of the crease, making a point of it, and round up, the top of the sleeve to be about two and a half inches deep. A band is stitched on the lower end of the sleeve, and the top is gathered into the armhole for rather more than half its length, the lower portion being sewed in plain.

The lower part of the sleeves is always sewed into a chemise before the band is put on.

Very pretty French patterns for chemises can be bought at the pattern-stores, and among these patterns the French *sacque-chemise* is the simplest and most comfortable, sleeves and all being cut in one, without even a band to put on the neck, only a tape facing, through which is run a draw-string. The neck above this can be scalloped or trimmed with narrow edging.

THE PRINCESS shape is very much liked by some because of its fitting rather close at the waist, and not being buncy elsewhere. This is a very comfortable garment when properly cut ; but, when it is cut badly, it drags and pulls in a most annoying manner. For those who wish to look particularly slender, it is very much in demand ; but it can be cut only by a regular pattern.

THE COMBINATION GARMENT also has its advocates, as saving trouble and being conducive to health. It consists of chemise and drawers in one, buttoning in front to the end of the bust, while the gathers at the back are put on a narrow band. In other ways, it is made like the ordinary chemise and drawers ; and Fig. 6 gives a diagram of the pieces belonging to this curious garment.

These directions are all for plain garments ; but they may be trimmed and embroidered, ruffled and laced, to al-

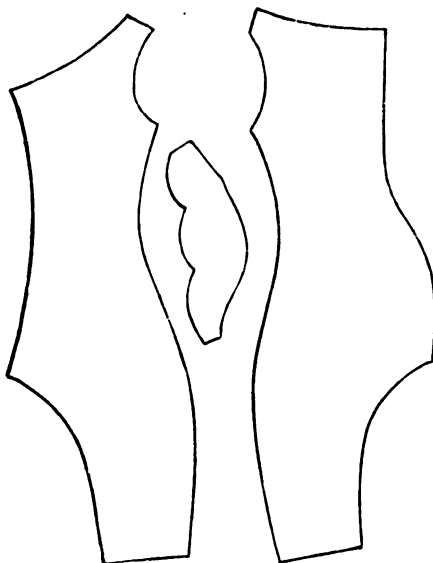


FIG. 6.

most any extent. A very pretty and yet simple way of finishing the neck and sleeves of a linen chemise is to make a puffing of the thinnest Indian mull, and sew this at each edge on the bands at the neck and sleeves which thus line it. Between the mull and linen is inserted a ribbon of suitable width, and of any desired color, which can easily be withdrawn when the garment is laundried, by hemming each end of the mull puff and not uniting them. A small bow of the ribbon in front and on each sleeve conceals this, besides adding to the ornamental effect ; and an edging of fine Torchon lace (which washes well) completes a very pretty garment. The bosom is in fine tucks.

Two yards and a half of linen or muslin will make an abundantly large chemise for an ordinary-sized person. It is a good plan to buy an extra piece of linen of the size of the band, as this should always be taken from the length, and not the width, of the material; and, whether the chemise is made of linen or muslin, the band should always be of linen, as it wears better and keeps whiter.

DRAWERS are more troublesome to cut than any other under-garment, as it is so easy to make mistakes in them; and, owing to the difference between the back and the front, a pattern is required of one entire side. In length, they should reach a little below the knee; when they are too long, the effect is very slovenly. They are made of linen, muslin, and canton-flannel, the latter being indispensable for cold weather, unless knitted or flannel drawers are worn under the muslin ones.

These garments vary in style—closed drawers opening on the side being preferred by some, while others join the two fronts, and leave them open in the back. The French pattern, which is entirely open—each leg being made separately and faced all around—is particularly comfortable; but even this has its back and front, the former being wider, and sloping up from the side to about two and a half inches in the middle of the back.

The pattern in Fig. 7 has the fronts joined, and the various measurements are carefully given. These can be taken either from the person or from some other exact pattern. The length of the side must first be ascertained, on the *outside* of the leg, from the waist to the calf; then the size of the waist, which is marked at the calf in the illustration.

A straight line (*a, b*) is drawn, upon which the measurement of the length of the side is marked (*a, c*). Then three lines are drawn from left to right. The first line at the top makes an angle with *a*. The second line at point

d shows the center of the line *a c*. The third line, near the extreme end, makes an angle with point *e*. These

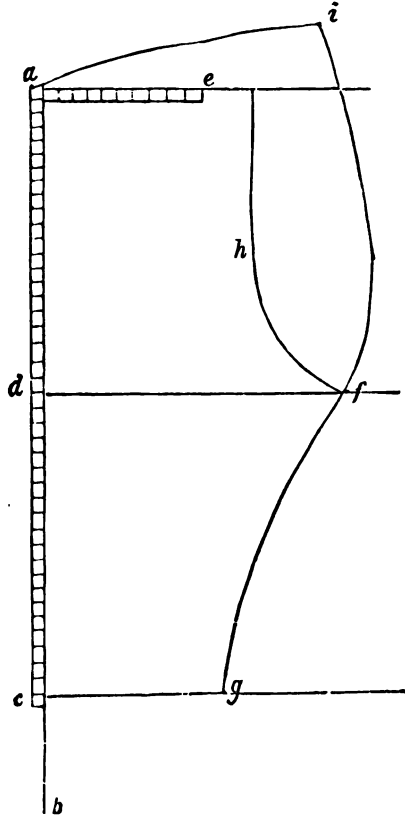


FIG. 7.

three straight lines indicate, first, the measurement of the waist ; secondly, the width at the lower part of the thigh ; and, thirdly, the width of the lower part of the leg. The measurement of the waist is taken at point *a*, and is shown at the right at point *e*. If the length of the side be thirty

inches, fifteen inches (the half) will be the measurement of the widest part of the leg. This width is to be laid at *d*, upon the straight line at the center shown at point *f*.

The measurement for the lower part of the leg is marked upon the third straight line. The length of this line must always depend more upon personal convenience than upon custom. This size is to be placed upon the pattern at *e*, and the length shown at *g*. By the help of the above measurements, carefully marked, the pattern for the front half of the drawers may be traced in the following manner: A few inches from *e*, a straight line is to be drawn to *h*, which ought to be at half the distance from the second line (*d f*). A slanting line is to be drawn from *h* to *f* to form the *slope* of the drawers. Again, another slanting line, hollowed out in the center, and almost straight at the end, is to be drawn from point *f* to *g*. This line is for the inner seam of the leg.

To make the back of the drawers higher and wider than the front, about five inches must be marked off above the first straight line, *i*, which will not be exactly over *e*, but taken some inches toward the right. A sloping line from *i* to *a* is to be drawn for the shape of the top, and a curved line from *i* to *f* for the line of the back.

The illustration shows, at the same time, the front and the back of the drawers. The two halves are always cut at the same time from one piece of material, which is doubled for the purpose, and cut after the shape of the pattern from the lower end *c* to the top. Then the stuff is to be unfolded in order to cut half after the shape *c, e, h, f*, and the front part; and the other half to follow the shape *a, e, f*, of the back, allowing about half an inch everywhere for seams. The pattern is now taken off and the material unfolded, and one half of the drawers is found complete. The second half is to be cut exactly like it.

Each half of the drawers is joined by a run and felled

seam, and the bottoms can be finished according to individual taste. If tucks are wanted (and narrow tucks above a hem and ruffle are exceedingly neat), room must be allowed for them in cutting out. Puffings and Hamburg edging are also used, while some prefer a simple hem with button-hole scallops. The two halves are next joined in the front by a strong seam from the waist, *e* to *h*, where the slope begins. The two back halves remain separate from *e* to *f*; these, with the remaining open portion, have a strong facing of the material, two inches wide, at the widest part, which is about the middle of the whole, and tapering off to half that width at the top of the back. Some persons use nothing stronger for facing than a moderately wide tape, while others, again, only use this for the middle, merely hemming the backs, the strong facing being "too much trouble." But it is a trouble that pays, as this portion of the garment is sure to wear out first.

In preparing the band for the waist, it is quite customary to tear off a straight piece of muslin, about an inch wide when doubled, and to fasten this with one large button and button-hole. A better way is to slope up the band to two inches in the back, the even width of one inch to cover about one third of the band in the middle of it, and the opposite third (the middle of the back) to contain the two-inch portion, the small portion between being used for the slope. Two medium-sized (not *small*) buttons and button-holes bear the strain better than one large one on a narrow band; and they should be sewed on three thicknesses of the material, one being placed between the double binding. The upper, or folded, edge is, of course, straight, and the slope is made at the bottom, where it is joined to the garment.

In putting on the band, there are scarcely any gathers until the slope begins, and most of the fullness is put in the back.

Fig. 8 represents the garment complete; but in the

pattern it is finished with drawing-strings at the waist in place of buttons and button-holes. The former are de-

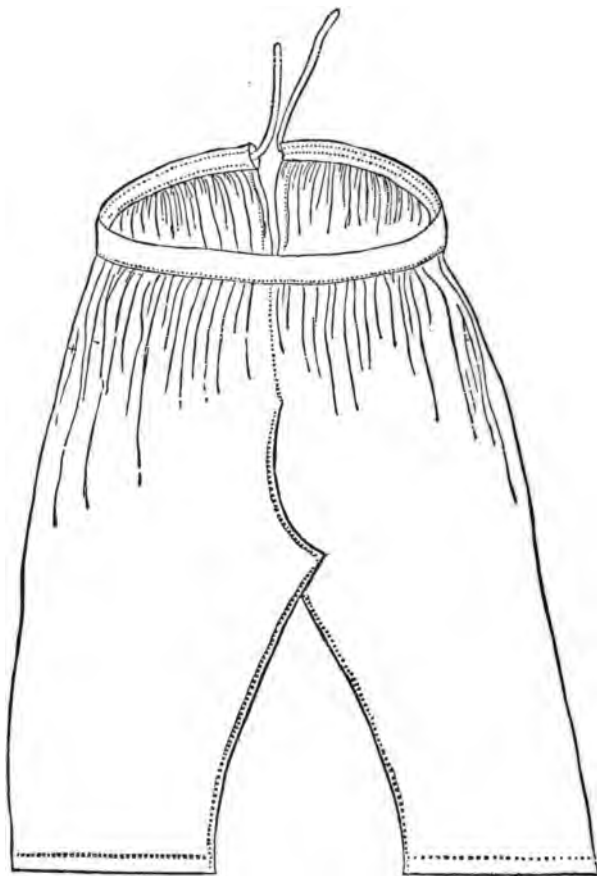


FIG. 8.

cidedly perishable and inconvenient. The general principles are the same for all patterns of drawers, the ends in view consisting chiefly of strength and neatness.

III.

UNDER-GARMENTS.—(CONTINUED.)

IN order to a right understanding of the method of cutting a NIGHT-DRESS, it is necessary, although rather out of place among under-garments, to describe the process of constructing a SACQUE.

This useful article is invaluable both for out-door and in-door wear, and can be made to suit any need. The style is that of the basque waist; and, if intended to fit the waist, the basque can be lengthened to the required depth, and widened in proportion. If, as in Figs. 9 and 10, the garment is to be half-fitting, it is only necessary to enlarge the size of the waist, upon which the size of the whole depends. The depth of the side, front, back, etc., should be marked, so that the length (*b*) of the latter is placed about one or two inches above the proper place for the waist. This shortening the waist gives the garment a more pronounced bend over the hips. If the skirt is large, no plaits will be required, hollowing out the lines of the side (*a*, *c*) being sufficient.

The BACK is finished first (if the pattern has been traced on the lining) by adding the skirt of the garment. Then the material must be cut in one piece for the back, two for the sides, and two for the fronts. These different parts are joined, using the outline of the pattern as the place for the seams.

The SLEEVES can be made after any desired style, and

adapted to the current fashion. The neck is finished by a band, a small turned-down collar, or a straight, upright one.

The EDGE of the garment is bordered by a false hem

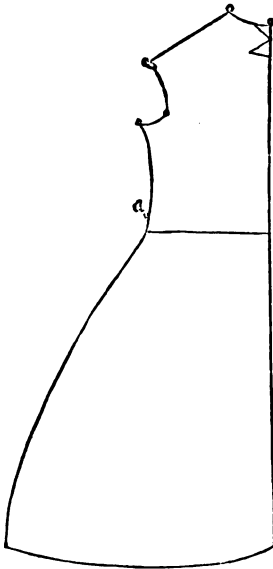


FIG. 9.

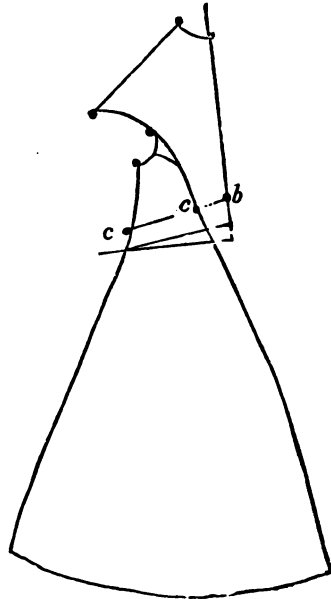


FIG. 10.

or an appropriate trimming. A simple and inexpensive one is made by cutting bands of the material on the cross, slightly raveling the edges, and plaiting them in the center. This looks especially well in cashmere; and, placed at the top of lace or fringe, or even by itself, is very suitable for some jackets.

This same shape can be used as a dressing-sacque, and made in any material, such as cambric, flannel, etc.; or it forms a handsome out-door jacket in velvet, cloth, or other

rich material. The foundation can be elaborated into almost any style.

One or two plaits can be placed in front to show the waist, or the fronts may be cut after the fashion of a Princess dress—with each front in three pieces. If the seam of the second piece be carried to the shoulder, any kind of trimming can be placed on it to form braces, fichus, etc.

Another alteration can be made to do away entirely with the side pieces, and to cut the back in two parts with a seam down the center. This is sloped, so as slightly to go in at the waist. In order to do this, the material must be slightly sloped at the center of the back and under the arms. This class of jacket is a medium between a perfectly fitting and quite a loose jacket.

The back being cut in two pieces does not prevent the side pieces being formed also; and a particularly stylish air is given to the garment by having the seam down the center slightly sloped at the waist, and the two side seams carried up to the shoulders. If liked, an addition may be made to the back by cutting through the line of the waist and enlarging the lower part, or skirt, of the jacket, so as to form some plaits at the back of the waist.

In fact, any part of the jacket may be enlarged, and any shape given, making the front larger than the back, etc.

A favorite NIGHT-DRESS pattern is that of an enlarged sacque, for which three yards and five eighths of yard-wide material is sufficient for a medium-sized person. The cutting is begun by taking off the five eighths, which is intended for sleeves; then the three-yard piece is folded, so as to give two breadths of equal length. One of these is to be doubled lengthwise in the middle, and the fronts cut out by the pattern of sacque, in Fig. 9. If the garment is to be open all the way down, divide the middle breadth in two (lengthwise); if only partially open, the fronts are to be separated by a slit about twenty inches long.

Yard-wide muslin will make the night-dress broad enough without gores, except for a very stout person ; if these additions are needed, sufficient will remain from the upper part to make them. They are sewed on either side of the front, selvage to selvage, by the seam known as "run and back-stitch," although very particular people overcast these selvage seams. Great care should be taken to slope the long seams nicely from arm-hole to hem, and to see that there is no bungling where the gores commence. The bottom is finished with a hem half as wide again as for a chemise.

Shirt-sleeves and coat-sleeves are both used for these night-dresses, and both are finished with a cuff, either real or simulated by the trimming, and sometimes with a ruffle in addition.

The back of the night-dress is also cut by the *sacque* pattern ; and, to make it sufficiently strong, the top is lined in yoke-shape. Small tucks placed close together, or rows of tucks separated by insertion or puffing, often form a yoke on the outside, while a portion of the trimming is continued down the entire front. Small tucks and ruffles are very neat. Three buttons and button-holes, beginning at the neck, are sufficient to fasten the night-dress ; and the wrist is more comfortable if made to slip the hand through without a fastening.

Some night-dresses are made with a pocket on the left side to hold a handkerchief ; and this, when edged with lace to match neck and sleeves, has quite a dressy appearance.

Night-dresses cut with a yoke and fullness have the breadths from six to eight inches shorter than for the *sacque* pattern. The yoke is cut from the plain waist pattern, making the chest two inches wider. The breadths are gored as for a chemise, and the front breadth is opened either down to the hem or part way, as in the *sacque* pat-

tern. The arm-hole is formed partly by the yoke and partly cut in the side seam, and should be strengthened by a facing, although this is seldom done, as it does not look so well. The breadths are then gathered across the top, leaving two or three inches plain at the arm-hole, and sewed on to the yoke. A narrow ruffle makes as pretty a finish for a night-gown yoke as for a dress.

This pattern requires from five and a half to six yards of muslin, and is finished with a gathered sleeve.

White skirts are made very much like the under-skirt of a dress; they are about as wide, but somewhat shorter. Sometimes the back breadth only reaches half way from the binding, and is finished with a deep ruffle, making it the full length. The gathered part is very neatly put on, and finished, where it is joined by a narrow bias band stitched on either side. The bottom of the skirt has a deep hem, over which there is often a scant ruffle of the same depth, headed by some narrow tucks in the skirt—sometimes a second ruffle and a second heading of tucks.

The breadths are very much gored, and run up like the breadths of a dress. The opening is invariably in the back, and is finished by a broad hem on the upper side and a narrow one underneath.

A straight binding fastened by strings is in most common use for a white skirt; but this implies tying the garment closely around the waist—whereas it is desirable to have as few layers there as possible. The *yoke-binding*, which rests on the hips, is a far better invention; and, with the aid of a Princess dress, it will be found very easy to cut. It should be stitched all around, and finished with two buttons and button-holes of about the same size as those used for drawers. The yoke is joined in front at the straight ends, and the back should be bias. The breadths of the skirt are cut shorter than when a binding is used.

The amount of material required varies with the style

of the garment and the height of the wearer. For the kind of skirt described, with cut breadth at the back, yoke, and one ruffle at the bottom, with deep hem and small tucks above, from four and a quarter to four and a half yards of cambric muslin would be the medium limit.

A flannel skirt is made shorter and scanter, and has a muslin yoke. For this, three yards, or even less, will suffice. The seams, after being run evenly together, are pressed open on the wrong side, and fastened down with the stitch known as herring-bone or cat-stitch. The bottom of the skirt is often finished with elaborate embroidery in silk; but a neat hem, headed with a row of chain-stitching, either in silk or linen floss, is sufficient for ordinary purposes.

IV.

“THE SONG OF THE SHIRT.”

MORE tears have probably been shed over amateur shirt-making, with its frightfully complicated “seam and gusset and band,” than over any other branch of needle-work. Often the most painstaking toil seems to be rewarded with the least success ; and “giving up” is the only alternative left to the disheartened young wife.

A generation or two ago, to be able to make a shirt was an indispensable accomplishment for a young lady who aspired to the honors of matrimony ; for in those days there were no establishments where dozens could be had ready-made at a moment’s notice, and at wonderfully reasonable prices. In view of these facts, it is often a source of wonder why some industrious *mater familias* will spend so many hours, day after day, over her needle and sewing-machine, making shirts for husband and sons, when they can go to a dozen places and be as well supplied at a great saving of time and trouble.

But *mater familias* will answer that they are *not* so well supplied. The shirts *look* beautiful—that first gloss of bosom, collar, and cuffs, is indescribable—but, like the bloom on the fruit, once rubbed off it never comes again. Ordinary laundering gives them a different aspect ; and soon edges begin to fray out, seams to give way, and joinings to slit, until a general air of shabbiness pervades the whole. Ready-made clothes are seldom *well* made ; in the

haste attendant upon accomplishing them in wholesale fashion, there is no time to turn in proper seams, to put stays where the strain comes, or to sew in any other way than with the machine.

The good housewife declares that a set of bought shirts last but one year, while the same number of home manufacture are good for two. Experience proves that it is the same with all under-garments; and, for this reason alone, it is desirable to know how to do the work one's self. Much of it may be done on the sewing-machine; and by "making a day" of it, with one to sew, and one to baste—and another, if possible, to finish off—a great deal can be accomplished in a comparatively short time.

Besides, shirts are not what they once were, with their long, wide, bulgy bosoms, tucked to the bitter end, and opening in front for the further maliciousness of buttons and button-holes; and neither are carefully-stitched collars and cuffs now appended. The generation that cried over shirts had reason to cry; a fact of which any one who reads ancient volumes of needle-work soon becomes convinced. "The Song of the Shirt" is a dismal ditty, but the subject was dismal too.

In the illustration, Fig. 11, the bosom is made in the old style; but with this exception it answers very well to explain the modern method.

The best way of proceeding in making shirts at home is to have a good paper pattern (which is very easily procured), but, if this is not at hand, exact measurements must be taken from the person. The points to be noted in doing this are:

1. The length of the whole shirt, which is taken from the nape of the neck at the back to the knee.
2. The width of the chest, taken from under one arm to the corresponding point on the other side.
3. The size of the neck.

4. Length of the sleeves.

5. Size of the wrist.

For a medium-sized man, the shirt would measure in the back about a yard and six inches ; and in the front

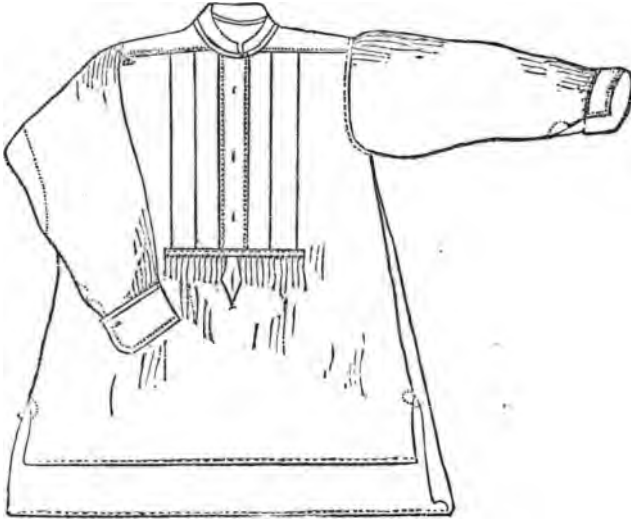


FIG. 11.

(which is always cut shorter) a yard and three inches. Three yards and a half of muslin will make the garment. It is well to cut off sleeves and yoke first, and make the two straight breadths of what remains. These breadths are prepared separately before being sewed together.

For the front a crease is first made down the middle, to mark the exact half, but this is neither plaited nor cut out, as in the old method, in order to form the bosom. The latter is made of linen, about fifteen and a half inches being a medium length, and eight inches of breadth. A crease is marked down the middle of this piece, on which to work the eyelet-holes for studs ; and it is tapered to

about half the width at the bottom. Sometimes the bosom is quite plain, and sometimes a single tuck, which must be allowed for, is made on either side of the eyelets. Too fine a quality of linen is not desirable, but one with some "body," as this retains the starch better. It is lined with "butchers' linen," and stitched on over the corresponding place in the middle of the front breadth, thus making two thicknesses of linen and one of muslin. After hollowing out the neck, the linen bosom should descend on the shoulder for about two inches.

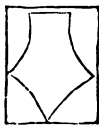


FIG. 12.

At the lower end of the bosom a sort of flap, represented in Fig. 12, is stitched, to keep the front down smoothly. This is accomplished by means of a button-hole fastened on a button of the vest.

The needle-woman who does not particularly fancy either patching shirts or making new ones, will next baste on a *muslin facing*, stopping at the line where the shirt-bosom stops, and covering every inch above it except where there are already three thicknesses. This will be found an excellent preventive against wearing out, and a great improvement on the two-inch facing generally used. When the bottom is hemmed, and neck, shoulders, and arm-holes cut out, the front may be considered finished.

- The modern shirt opens in the back; and the most elegant style of treating the slit is to turn down a hem of an inch in width, or rather to put a facing of that depth on the right side of the muslin, but left side of the shirt, and lap it over a narrow hem on the other side, the whole to be stitched down. A less troublesome and more common way is to put a narrow hem on each side, and secure the end with a small gusset.

The upper part of the back below the yoke has the same facing as the front; and these two linings are evenly joined under the arms. This half of the shirt is sewed, after be-

ing gathered, on a yoke, which is necessarily in two pieces, one of which is represented in Fig. 13. This yoke is lined, and the gathers are placed between and stitched on

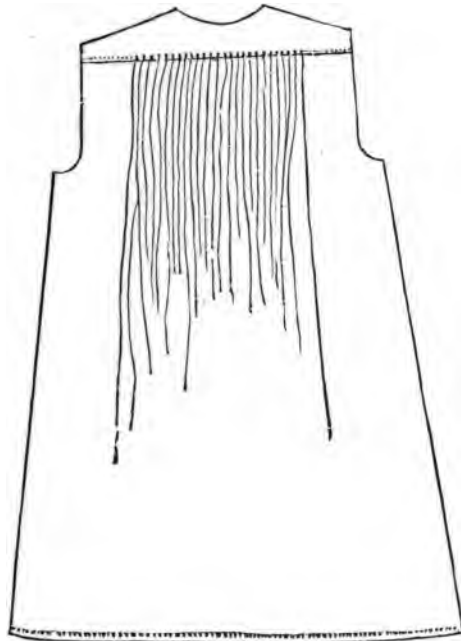


FIG. 13.

each side. On either end is a plain piece of about two inches, and midway of the yoke, where it joins, are button and button-hole to fasten the shirt together.

The bottom of the back is hemmed in the same way as that of the front, both being rounded at the corners ; and the sides are also hemmed for a space of about two fingers. The two halves of the shirt are then united by a felled seam, as the sides are sloped ; and a small gusset at the end of this seam prevents it from giving way.

The neck, cut to the proper size and shape, is finished with a narrow band, and at each end of this band, as well as in the middle, there is a button-hole for the studs, that fasten on the collar. These button-holes should be made *lengthwise* of the band.

From twenty-seven to thirty-five inches of muslin will be required for sleeves ; and these are cut partly on the bias, in such a way that one width of the material will make both sleeves. One side of each sleeve is straight, and this straight side is the upper one, as the strain comes beneath. The sleeve is somewhat rounded at the upper end, and has a little fullness just at the top of the shoulder. It is closely back-stitched in on the right side, and hemmed down on the wrong, being put in the double yoke and lining.

The seam of the sleeve stops at about a finger's length from the bottom ; and this opening is either finished with a narrow hem on each side and a small gusset at the end of the seam, or it has a wider stitched hem or facing on one side, and the gusset is dispensed with. The sleeve is gathered into a wide band with a button-hole at each end for the inevitable stud, and a button in the middle for fastening on the cuff.

Collars and cuffs are rarely made ; as they can be bought at so low a rate, there is no inducement to spend the necessary time over them. For it is a job of no little nicety to get them perfectly smooth, evenly stitched, and well-fitting ; and, in spite of speedily fraying edges, *mater familias* draws the line there and declares that it doesn't pay to make what can be constantly replenished at so trifling a cost.

Night-shirts are not unlike plain night-dresses ; but they are not made so long in proportion to the length of the figure, and are usually without trimming.

The length of an ordinary night-dress is a very good

size for a man of medium height ; and the garment can either be cut in sacque shape, or made like a day-shirt minus the bosom. Unbleached muslin is a very good material for winter wear ; and four and a half or five yards will be required for a shirt. It opens in front, the slit lapping over from left to right with a wide hem, or facing, and is fastened with a button and button-hole in the middle, as well as one at the neck. The sleeves are made like ordinary shirt-sleeves.

RUDIMENTS OF DRESS-MAKING.

DRESS-MAKING, when one understands it, and has an eye for color, and some taste and ingenuity in trimming, is one of the most fascinating phases of needle-work. The results are more showy than in making under-garments; there is a greater amount of creative skill implied; and a dress ranks so much higher in the world of clothing than a garment that is hidden from sight, that the triumph of such an achievement is great in proportion.

If there is economy in making under-garments at home, the saving is incomparably greater in the making of dresses. Unless the material is costly, the dress-maker's bill frequently exceeds the price of the dress pattern, and it swells in proportion to the value of the stuff, "trimmings" and "findings" being most convenient cloaks for inordinate charges. Careless work, too, often emanates from the hands of the over-driven sewing girls, who really execute what Madame directs, and only half superintends; while the loss of time, and wear and tear of temper, under the disappointments and mistakes that seem inevitable in putting work out, are worthy of more consideration than they receive. Many a dress has finally been altered at home, after paying largely for a misfit and waste of material.

Having a dress-maker in the house, the plan usually pursued by the economical, is a species of bondage, a tying down to days and hours which, like some matrimonial en-

agements or "understandings," binds one side while the other is free. The dress-maker who goes out by the day—especially if she is greatly in demand—is not apparently bound in the least. You make all your arrangements for her in advance, decline pleasant invitations for the appointed day, or days, of her expected visitation, put yourself in other ways to great inconvenience because of the mysterious perversity of inanimate things; rise at some unwonted hour, that has, at least, the bloom of the dawn upon it, to transact before breakfast various matters that are indispensable to the proper beginning of the day, but which are generally postponed until after that meal, dispense with anything like "a social time" at table, and hurriedly regain your room, that has the look of decks cleared for action, to be for the next hour a Marianna in a moated grange, saying to yourself, with more and more of certainty, "*She cometh not.*"

And she doesn't come. In the course of the day, perhaps, a postal card brings the information that she has a cold, or a felon, or has remembered a previous engagement; or, as likely as not, nothing is heard from her. When sought out and remonstrated with, you find that she had quite forgotten you, or "thrown you over" for the delights of ball or wedding finery. For dress-makers are not unlike small colored persons in their fondness for places where "things are going on"; and such engagements are of far more importance in their eyes than those which concern economical walking-dresses or humdrum black silks.

There are, of course, fortunate people, whose dress-makers always come when they are expected, and who seem exempt from the usual troubles encountered with Madame; but the experience recorded is that of many, and few would not be free from the dress-maker's tyranny if they could, while many, in fact, *might* be if they would but think so.

Some women have no other way of making money than

by saving it ; and in making one's own dresses the dollars saved count up very rapidly. From eight to ten dollars is the common price for making an ordinary dress, and twenty dollars is thought reasonable for a handsome silk, these charges not including even a spool of cotton ; while a dress-maker who goes out to work is paid from two to three dollars a day, sometimes rather more and occasionally a little less, car fares being paid besides. In the latter case, the employer's time is almost entirely taken up in helping her and attending to her wants ; and, considering that, besides this, there is usually so much left to finish afterward, the question arises whether the lady could not, with the same outlay of time and trouble, make her dress without the inconvenience of the dress-maker's presence, and at a saving of whatever sum she would pay her ?

Another item of economy in making one's own dresses is the amount of material used. An unnecessary quantity is always consumed at a fashionable establishment, where no account has to be rendered ; but, when the cutting out is done at home, there is some chance of saving the material. One's own property is usually more precious than that of another, and one who is in the constant habit of cutting up goods is apt to become a little reckless. Therefore, the person who is portioning out her own material with a realizing sense of the difficulty of replacing it is far more likely to cut it economically.

Fathers of families, who have a peculiar dread of dress-makers' bills, and are by no means partial to the visits of the dress-maker at home, always advocate the theory of making one's own dresses ; and one gentleman offered as an incentive to his oldest daughter a new dress for every one that she made for her little sisters. The younger girls may not have enjoyed this arrangement, but the grown-up sister did ; and in a comparatively short time she became an accomplished dress-maker.

The practice acquired in making dolls' dresses nicely—and it should be insisted upon that they be made nicely—is an invaluable preparation to a girl for making her own dresses; while a few lessons taken from an experienced dress-maker will make many things easy that seem so difficult to the uninitiated. There is a peculiar knack in making French folds, false tucks, bindings, etc., which can be more thoroughly acquired by a little direct instruction than from weeks of hopeless puzzling over apparent mysteries that, in the clear light of knowledge, prove to be no mysteries at all.

The best way for a beginner to make a dress is to take a cheap material, the spoiling of which will not be a serious loss, and a pattern that is as exact as a pattern can be made. Excellent patterns on general principles can be obtained, at a trifling cost, by taking a few measurements, and giving the numbers thereof to the dealers; but these patterns are made upon the plan that all female figures are perfectly symmetrical, and this, unfortunately, is not the case.

It sounds very nice and easy to say that the proper proportions for the entire figure may be ascertained by such simple rules as that the proper size of the wrist is just half the measurement of the neck; that the length of the front of the waist equals that of the neck, and is half the circumference of the waist; while the waist is a duplicate of the inside length of the arm—the outside length of the arm equals the breadth of the chest—the length as well as the breadth of the back equals two thirds of the waist-measure, one third of the size of the waist equals the length under the arm. A statue may be formed by these directions, but scarcely a satisfactory dress.

Amateur dress-makers frequently complain that they are obliged to alter patterns before they can use them; and the best way of doing this is to rip apart an old dress-waist that

fits well, and lay it smoothly on the pattern. As the latter is generally too large, it will easily allow of alteration.

It is a very difficult matter to fit one's self, but some ladies who are highly successful in home dress-making have frames made exactly the size of their own figures, and similar to those used in the shops for displaying dresses and cloaks. This is an excellent plan, but one that can not be followed by all. A simpler and more economical one is to arrange a dress that fits well over a small pillow, using stockings and handkerchiefs for the necessary filling out, until a perfect fac-simile is obtained of the owner's own figure. This pliable dummy can be handled with ease, and have pins stuck in it without crying out; so that a good paper pattern may be cut on it with very little trouble.

Many prefer taking exact measurements from the person with a tape measure, which must, of course, be done by an assistant. The illustrations in Figs. 14 and 15 show the method of doing this, in connection with the directions below furnished by a practical Frenchwoman. The specifications given in small capitals are to be written down and supplemented by each measurement as it is taken :

1. **LENGTH OF SKIRT, BACK.**—(Fig. 14.) Measure from the waist at the middle, *b*, to touch the floor, or longer, as desired, allowing an extra half inch at top and bottom.

2. **LENGTH OF SKIRT, FRONT.**—(Fig. 15.) Measure from the waist in front, *b*, to touch the floor, making the same allowance at top and bottom as for the back.

3. **LENGTH OF WAIST IN FRONT.**—(Fig. 15.) Place one end of the measure at the base of the neck, *a*, and carry it down to the waist, *b*.

4. **BREADTH OF THE CHEST.**—Place one end of the measure at the right side of the chest, close to the arm, at the point *d*, and carry it, not too tightly drawn, across to the left arm, *e*.

5. **LENGTH UNDER THE ARM.**—Place the measure under the arm at the point *e* (Fig. 14), and carry it down to the waist, *c*.



FIG. 14.

6. **SIZE OF THE WAIST.**—Bring the tape around the waist evenly, neither tight nor loose, and reduce the measure by a scant half inch, because the measurement is taken outside the clothes.

7. **FIRST HEIGHT OF SHOULDER.**—(For the height of the shoulders two measurements must be taken to allow for the slope.) Place one end of the measure at the middle of the waist, *b* (Fig. 15), carry it to the point *f* at the neck, and thence down the back to the middle point, *b* (Fig. 14).

8. **SECOND HEIGHT OF SHOULDER.**—Place one end of

the measure at the point *e* (Fig. 15), carry it straight up over the shoulder at the point *g*, and down straight to the point *c* on the waist (Fig. 14).

9. ARM-SIZE.—Slip the measure under the arm and



FIG. 15.

meet it, without drawing it tightly, on the shoulder at the point *h* (Fig. 14).

10. LENGTH OF ARM.—The measure is placed under the arm, *c* (Fig. 15), and carried to the wrist, *i*. (The outside measure of the arm is useless.)

11. SIZE OF WRIST.—This measure is taken loosely.

12. LENGTH OF WAIST, BACK.—This measure is taken

from the nape of the neck, *a* (Fig. 14), to the waist at the point *b*.

13. BREADTH OF BACK.—This measure is taken across the shoulder-blades from *e* to *d* (Fig. 14), and the tape should be drawn tightly.

14. LENGTH OF SHOULDER.—Place one end of the measure at the base of the neck, *f* (Fig. 14), carry it down the slope of the shoulder to *g*, and an inch farther upon the arm.

15. SIZE OF NECK.—Draw the measure very loosely around the neck and meet it.

These measurements are intended for a plain, high-necked waist, which is the foundation of all waists or dresses, the varieties consisting of additions to this superstructure.

In cutting *any* pattern, only half the width of the back and front is needed, as the two halves are always alike.

Having taken exact measurements, according to the above directions, a smooth piece of pattern-paper, suffi-

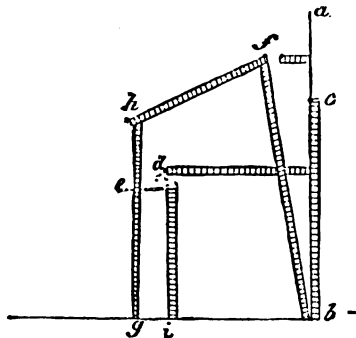


FIG. 16.

ciently large, is laid on the cutting-table ; and a straight line from *a* to *b* (Fig. 16) is traced for the front of the waist.

This shows where the buttons are to go. At the bottom of this line another straight one is taken—from the left to the right—making an angle with *b*, and this shows the place for the waist. After these first lines are drawn, the different measures are marked in the following manner :

Length of the Center of the Waist.—This is laid at *b* and taken to *c*.

Width of the Chest.—The measure must be laid on line *a b*, at a distance of about two thirds from the straight line for the waist, and taken to the left and marked at *d*.

Depth of Side.—This is found by placing the width of the chest on the line of the waist at *i*, immediately under *d*. The true place for the top of the side is at *e*, which should be *one fourth* of the straight line *d*.

First Shoulder-Depth.—The measure laid at *b* and taken to the top in a slanting direction to the left at *f*, the sixth part of the size of the neck, to be laid in a straight line above point *e* of the line, for the front of the slope from *f* to *e*, when cut, gives one third of the neck.

Second Height of the Shoulder.—The half is taken and laid at the waist, *g*, near to the measure of the line at the side to be taken straight up and marked at *h*.

Width of the Shoulder.—This is laid slantingly between the points of *h* of the first and of the second height. With all these different points marked, it will be easy to trace the lines between them for the pattern of the front of the waist. This is done in the following manner :

A sloped line from the points *h d*, and from thence a slope to *e* for the arm-hole. A straight line from *e* to *g* for the line at the side. On a pattern thus drawn, the size of the sleeve can be exactly obtained by laying half its measurement around the slope *h d e*. The size of the neck can be arrived at by the third of this being laid between the points *e f*.

In preparing a pattern for the back of the waist, a ver-

tical line is drawn for the middle and an horizontal line for the waist, as in arranging the front.

LENGTH OF THE BACK.—This measure is to be marked from a point, *e* (Fig. 17), an inch above the waist line ; and its upper end may be represented by the point *d*.

BREADTH OF BACK.—Place one end of the measure about the middle of the back, *c d*, and mark the point *e*. (This measure should be, of course, half the entire breadth.)

SIZE OF WAIST.—Take one fourth the waist measure, apply one end at the point *e*, and carry it obliquely to the horizontal line, making its extremity *f*.

LENGTH UNDER THE ARM.—Place one end of the measure at the point *f*, and carry it straight up to ascer-

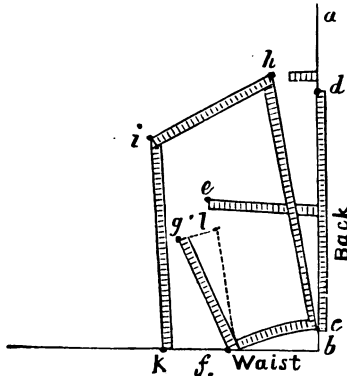


FIG. 17.

tain if the measure of the breadth of the back has been placed at the proper height. It should be a half inch above the point *l*. Then keeping the lower end of the measure in its place *f*, move the other end to the left obliquely as far as the point *g*, which should be distant from *l* a space equal to one fourth the breadth of the half-back.

FIRST HEIGHT OF SHOULDER.—Take half the measure, place one end at the point *c*, and carry it up a little obliquely to a point, *h*, which is fixed by taking one sixth of the neck measure, placing it against the vertical line *a b*, a little above the point *d*, and directing it toward the left. The point *h*, however, will be removed a scant half-inch farther to the left.

SECOND HEIGHT OF SHOULDER.—Take half the measure, place one end at a point, *k*, on the horizontal line, carry it straight up to *i*, verifying the position of this point, and consequently of *k*, by applying the measure for the length of shoulder between *h* and *i*.

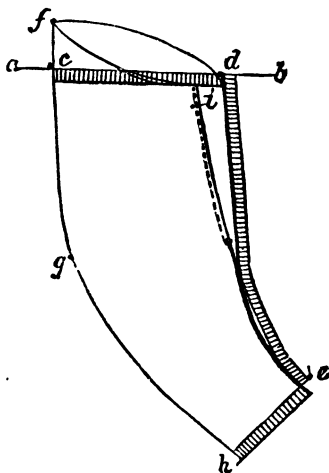


FIG. 18.

These measures being indicated, the outlines are drawn from point to point, until the complete pattern of the back is represented as in Fig. 17.

The sleeve of a plain waist is usually the plain coat-sleeve as in Fig. 18. To draw this pattern, begin with an

horizontal line, *a b*, near the top of the paper. On this line mark half the measure of the arm-size, *c d*. Then place the measure of the length of the arm between the points *d* and *e*, the latter being somewhat to the right, and requiring the line to be slightly curved in its lower third. Draw this line, and for the outside draw a line beginning two inches above the horizontal line *a b* at the point *f*, which is to be straight as far as the point *g*, which indicates the middle of the inner line *d e*; then curving to correspond with the inner line, and be prolonged about an inch beyond it to the point *h*.

An oblique line from *h* to *a* indicates the bottom of the sleeve measured by the size of the wrist. For the top there are two outlines, as shown in the figure, the upper side of the sleeve being longer than the under. Frequently the under side of the sleeve is also cut narrower from the top of the sleeve as far down as the elbow, as shown by the line *i* in the figure.

In cutting out the plain, round waist from the lining (which is always done first), two little plaits are made at the top of the front—as in Fig. 19—but these are not made in the *outside* material. They are intended to give a neater fit at a point where ungainly creases are apt to appear. The horizontal fold will take up a third of an inch. This must be made first. The vertical plait is smaller, though both appear larger in the illustration than they really are. The stouter the figure, the larger the plaits required; but they should never be dispensed with entirely.

The “darts,” or “forms,” as they are indiscriminately called, are a sore puzzle to the amateur dress-maker, who feels at this point of her work like a mariner at sea without a compass. But even this hopeless-looking tangle may be straightened out by settled rules. A third of the chest-measure is taken and one end applied to the angle where

the front and waist-line meet exclusive of margins ; then mark the point (the dot to the left of *a*) as the base of the

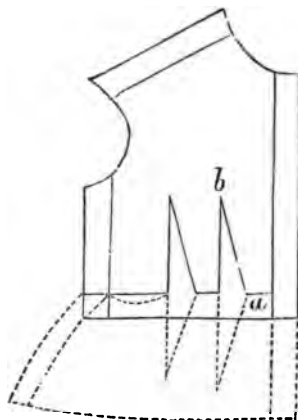


FIG. 19.

first dart. The height of the dart falls two inches below the arm-size. The plait is now taken up, as shown in the figure, straight down from the point *b* on the side toward the back, and obliquely to *a* on the front. Measure again a third of the chest-measure from this dart to the outer side of the second, and take up the second dart. These darts should be nearly of the same length ; the one nearer the arm may be a little longer ; if the figure to be fitted is very short, both must be somewhat shorter than here represented.

The “margin” alluded to above refers to the lining cut from the paper pattern, in which an allowance is recommended of two inches on the shoulder, one inch in front, under the arms, and at the waist ; while neck and arm-holes exactly follow the pattern.

The beginner in dress-making will find it easier to buy

a good paper pattern, and modify it according to these rules, as this will give a clearer idea of the arrangement of the darts in front and the seams at the back than any mere description can do.

The "French back," which is now in such general use, has, besides the seam in the middle, two on each side of it, one taking the place of the old-fashioned "side-piece," which is nearer the middle, and another between that and the seam under the arm. This style of back is particularly desirable for a stout figure, as it gives a more slender appearance.

The necessity of knowing how to suit a pattern to the intended wearer of the garment is illustrated by the following experience: A young girl, wishing to do something for her mother, decided to make a house-jacket for her in violet cashmere; she had already made one for herself which had not answered very badly, as she had procured a pattern which happened to be nearly her size. This she still had by her; and, pinning it upon the cashmere, she thought that, by cutting it a little larger in every direction, it could not fail to answer.

After having joined the different parts of the jacket, the young lady went in haste to try it on her mother. Judge of her confusion when she saw her mother overwhelmed in a garment to which no name could be given; it was much too large in the neck, too narrow in the shoulders, too wide in the back, too large in the waist, and considerably too tight across the chest and hips.

The young lady sadly contemplated her work, and thought that there must be some secret in knowing how to cut out a garment unerringly. The "secret" consisted simply in *knowing what measurements to take and how to take them*. The "secret" learned, any one may at once feel herself equal to cutting out any article of dress after any prevailing fashion.

VI.

DRESS-MAKING IN DETAIL.

THE BLOUSE, or French waist, which has so long retained its popularity, especially for slender figures, is liked both for thick and thin material, the former with, and the latter without a lining. A waist of this sort is, perhaps, the most promising experiment which the unskilled dress-maker can undertake.

Either large or small plaits are laid, both in the back and front of a blouse waist; and the best way is to make these plaits in the straight material before it is laid on the pattern, the length of the waist having first been cut off. When the material is narrow, it can be joined under a plait without showing. Three large plaits, or five smaller ones, are sufficient for front and for back, and, in cutting it out by the pattern of the plain waist, it is only necessary, in place of darts, to narrow it suitably at the waist by slanting toward the seams under the arms.

When a lining is used, it is cut exactly after the pattern of the plain waist; and the plaits are taken only in the outside material. Plain stuffs and narrow stripes (the latter being an excellent guide for the plaits) are most suitable for this style of waist.

Figs. 20, 21 and 22 represent another very pretty waist, which is made with a yoke. It is easily cut from a plain waist pattern, and is managed thus:

Draw the size of the shoulder, neck, and arm, also the line of the front, the extra width of paper or material being

at the left; then draw the horizontal line *a b* across the pattern, crossing the arm-size at about the middle, and cut



FIG. 20.—BLOUSE WAIST.

away what is above this line for the yoke. The outline of the rest of the arm-size and the seam under the arm are removed as far to the left as is desired, allowing two or

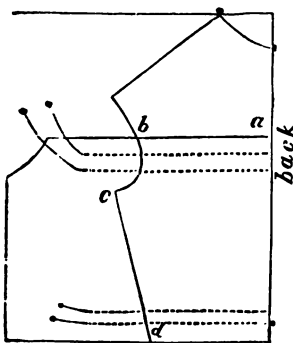


FIG. 21.

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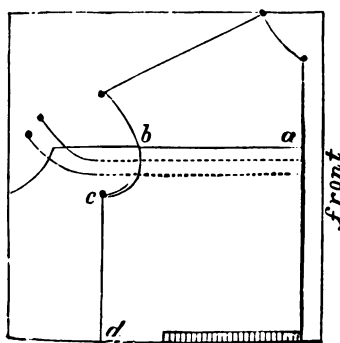


FIG. 22.

three times the width of a plain waist for the gathers at top and bottom.

The yoke and its lining (if there is one) being put together, the lower part is gathered and sewed in between them, a narrow ruffle, or some other trimming, being frequently placed on the seam. Plaits are often substituted for gathers, in flannel and other thick materials, with very good effect ; and these waists, like the blouses, are finished with a belt.

The appropriate sleeve for the blouse and yoke waists is a full sleeve, or the ordinary shirt-sleeve ; but a plain one is often used. The gathered sleeve (Fig. 23) is cut from a piece of material folded double, the straight way of the cloth. The upper edge, *a b*, is drawn like that of the plain coat-sleeve in Fig. 18 ; but it takes in the whole width of the sleeve, which should be about twice that of the plain



FIG. 23.

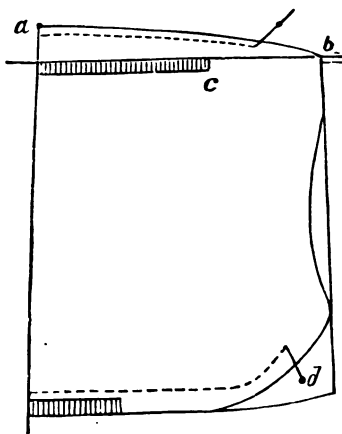


FIG. 24.

sleeve. The length is determined by the measure of the arm ; the corner *d* (see Fig. 24) is cut off from the bottom of the inner side, which is hollowed out a little.

These sleeves are gathered at top and bottom, leaving a couple of inches plain on either side of the seam at the top, and an inch, perhaps, at the bottom ; they are then finished with a cuff or band at the wrist.

A basque-waist (as distinguished from a long basque), the front of which is given in Fig. 19, is merely a continuation of the plain waist. The line under the arm is prolonged obliquely to the left, allowing an inch of width for every three inches of length. The line of the front is also prolonged to the desired length for the basque. The darts are taken as in a plain waist, but the seams are continued to the very end.

The back is also cut after the pattern of the French plain waist, with the necessary prolongations. All seams

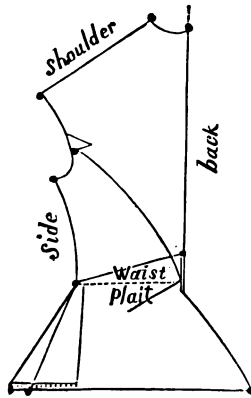


FIG. 25.—BASQUE WAIST.

should fit the arm-hole ; and if they do not come out evenly, they should be trimmed off at the neck and lower edge. A little plait is taken up at the waist on each side, beginning at the seams under the arms, and continuing to the second dart ; this prevents wrinkling about the waist.

The shape of the basque may be varied according to taste and fashion, but the general principles of cutting are the same. The sleeves for a basque also vary according to the prevailing style ; at the present time (1882) the plain coat-sleeve is most in demand for ordinary wear.

Under-skirts for dresses have scarcely changed at all for some time past, the short, round skirt being used on most occasions, while evening dresses are made with very long trains. From two yards to two and a quarter, depending

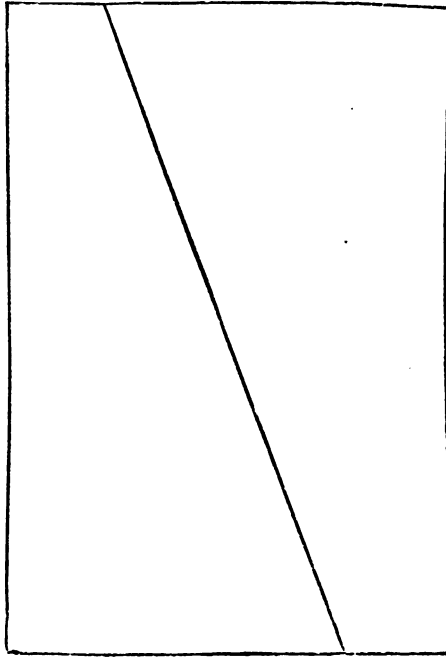


FIG. 26.

on the slenderness or stoutness of the wearer, is a good width at the bottom ; and from twenty-seven to thirty

inches is put in straight for the back. The front is gored, and also the side pieces, of which there are but two.

The manner of cutting these gores from a straight breadth is given in Fig. 26, and it is very important that both sides of the skirt should be exactly alike, or it will hang badly; and the hang of the skirt is a very prominent feature in the general appearance of a dress. Front and sides have little or no fullness, what there is being gauged or plaited into a small compass at the back, to which it is still further drawn by strings, or elastic, at least half way down.

The breadths having all been carefully cut and laid together, to make sure of their being even, a facing of twelve or fourteen inches in depth should be cut by each breadth and basted on it before the skirt is run up, leaving one edge of the facing free on each side to be hemmed down afterward, in order to cover the raw edges. This facing is cut lengthwise of the muslin, instead of across, as it hangs better, and is not so likely to sag.

In sewing up the breadths, the gored or bias side of one breadth is always put to the straight side of another, and this gored side should be held easily, and on no account stretched. The opening, or placquet-hole, may be left at the top of the back or side, as is preferred. It should measure from nine to twelve inches for a person of ordinary size, and be finished, to prevent gaping, with a doubled or hemmed piece of the dress material, two or three inches wide, sewed down the length of the under side.

A worsted braid, which has been thoroughly immersed in water to shrink it, and thus prevent it from shrinking after it is on the dress, should be bound, or faced, on the bottom of the skirt, leaving, in the latter case, one edge in sight below the edge of the dress. The waistband must be of strong material, cut lengthwise of the stuff, and doubled. It is marked in the middle of the front and

back ; and the skirt is marked to correspond, and sewed on closely with strong silk or thread.

The trimming of skirts varies greatly ; crosswise bands or folds, gathered and plaited ruffles, and flounces are the principal styles, and sometimes these are all combined on one garment. For gathered ruffles, a quarter of a yard extra to every yard is the proper allowance for fullness ; and in plaitings which touch, box-, knife-, or kilt-plaiting three times the length around the skirt is necessary. When more or less plain space is left between the plaits, the amount may be scanted accordingly.

For upper or over-skirts, fashion is so capricious that no measures can be given. Sometimes short and sometimes long, "to one thing constant never," the bought paper pattern of latest date is the only safe guide. Little or no trimming is used on the over-skirt, even in handsome materials ; and, situated as it is between basque and skirt, very little is needed.

The prettiest and most graceful of dresses is the garment known as the Duchesse, or Princess dress, in which the waist and skirt are of one piece, like a long-continued basque—giving an easy, flowing air to the figure, instead of cutting it up into sections. Its very simplicity is a work of art, and depends for effect upon the perfect fit and stylish cut of the dress.

The Princess could scarcely be recommended to a beginner, as each front has two or three separate pieces in addition to the divisions of the back, and all must fit perfectly together. To cut the pattern of this dress, a much greater length of paper than usual is required, as it extends from the neck to the bottom of the skirt. A horizontal line is first made for the waist at the proper distance, and the rest of the paper folded under. The outlines of a plain waist are then designed.

The next step is to take a sixth of the waist-measure

and lay it along the waist-line, beginning at the seam under the arm, and mark the other end. Then take half of this and lay it upon the waist-line, beginning at the front, and mark the point where it ends. A vertical line is then drawn from the middle of the shoulder-seam to the point first marked on the waist-line; and from the point *last* marked on the waist-line, a curving line, similar to the front outline of a dart, to meet the vertical line about midway of its height.

The paper is then cut, following these lines, and the front thus divided into two pieces, cutting away a space equivalent to what, in the plain waist, is taken up for darts;

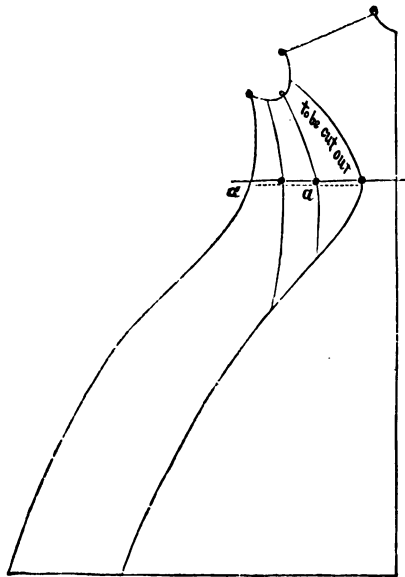


FIG. 27.

and the same rule that determines the height of darts for persons of stouter figure than the average decides here

whether the curved line shall meet the vertical midway of the latter, or a little lower than that.

The portion of the waist toward the arm is now cut in two, as shown in Fig. 27, for the purpose of obtaining sufficient fullness in the skirt.

On the paper, when unfolded, only the first part of the garment can be drawn in full. The pattern must be pieced at the dotted line, *a, a*, for the second and third part. To make the size and shape of these two parts perfectly clear,

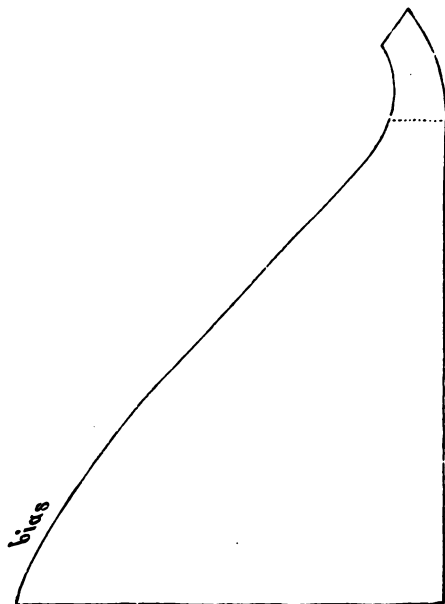


FIG. 28.

the pattern of each is given in full in Figs. 28 and 28*b* after being pieced.

The back is cut as for a basque; but frequently the middle is cut in two pieces, as shown in Fig. 29, so that the

skirt can be cut with a bias seam in the middle—which gives it a more graceful sweep. By widening the piece

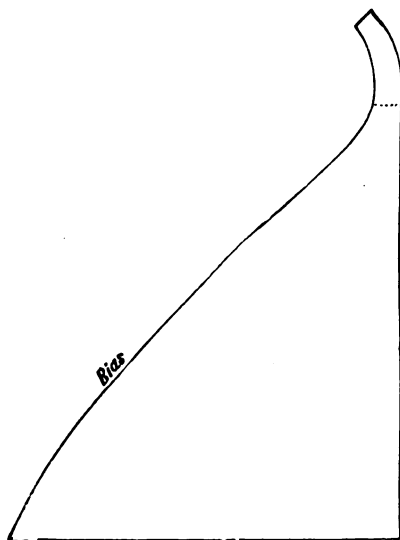


FIG. 28b.

added at the waist, extra fullness can be obtained, which may be laid over in a large double plait—also a very graceful effect; and for the Watteau plait, often so popular, it is only necessary to widen the back from the neck, and lay the material over in a large fold.

In cutting this dress, the lining is carried only a few inches below the waist, as the effect would be entirely spoiled if the lining went all the way down—giving stiffness in place of ease. Fig. 30 represents the different parts put together in their proper order; and it will be seen that there are *ten* pieces in this pattern.

The Princess polonaise is merely a Princess dress gathered up at the back, or the widths (some cut larger than

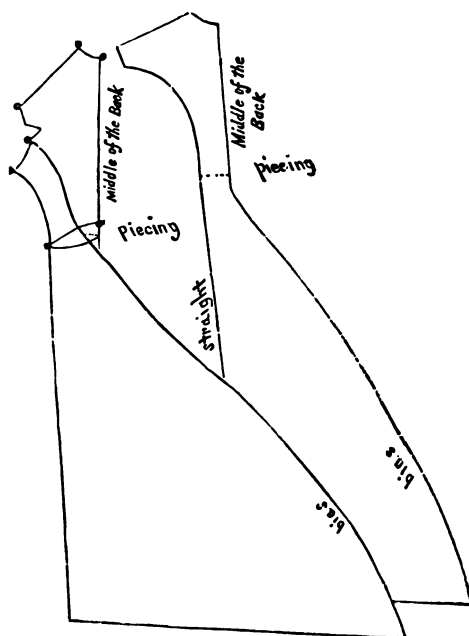


FIG. 29.



FIG. 30.

the others) plaited into each other ; arranged, in fact, in any style, the basis of the cut of the garment being always the same.

Very pretty morning dresses, as well as dressing-gowns and wrappers, are made from the Princess pattern ; and the only alteration needed is to make it rather looser, particularly at the waist. The Watteau fold is especially suitable and becoming for a garment of this character.

VII.

SEWING AND FINISHING.

HAVING cut out and arranged so much work, it seems desirable that some of it should be put together; and this is first done by basting, that needed alterations may be more easily made.

But before the basting, or even the cutting out of the material, is arrived at, there is much to be considered. If the fabric is an expensive one, such as silk, velvet, grenadine, etc., a yard or so of material over and above the amount required by the pattern will be found a prudent investment, as it is almost impossible exactly to match a thing a year or so after it is bought, and good material will always bear making over. With cheap goods, this precaution is scarcely needed; but some people invariably follow it with all dresses.

On the other hand, from a false notion of economy, ladies sometimes scant their dress patterns, and consider this just so much gained. It is so much gained of trouble and vexation, twisting and turning, bias parts cut only partly on the bias, frayed-out seams for want of sufficient material, and a host of annoyances, in addition to the shabby appearance of the dress at an early day—all of which might have been avoided by the expenditure of an extra dollar or two, perhaps less.

Another favorite economy with some is the use of cotton in place of sewing-silk, even for silk goods. A lady boasted that she had made over a very nice wrapper of all-

wool goods, with silk trimming, entirely with cotton, *and saved fifty cents!* The wrapper looked very well indeed, for cotton tells no tales at first; but, as the color was dark-blue, the seams would after a while look white or rusty, from the wearing off of the dye on the cotton. *Black* cotton, in place of silk, is even worse; and the latter should always be used for velvet, silk, or woollen materials, while the cotton is reserved for cotton goods.

Linings are treated with very little respect, being too often regarded as a rather superfluous and impertinent expense—something that “counts” up, but makes no show. The mention of a *silk* waist-lining will almost cause the economical home dress-maker’s hair to stand on end; but the French waists are always lined with silk, or the softest of silesias, with a silk finish; and this has much to do with their exquisite fit. “Twill,” a somewhat stiff and thick cotton fabric, is the favorite lining of the ordinary dress-maker; but this does not adapt itself readily to the figure, and shows through the least thin or broken place in the outer material, while silk of the same color prevents so early a stage of shabbiness. The twilled lining costs less; but a silk dress, or even a fine wool, is not an every-day affair, and may be indulged with a silk lining. The silesia with silk finish, when sufficiently thin and soft, will answer nicely in many cases; but white linen, which is frequently used, is too stiff and unyielding.

Linings, as well as all the other accessories, should be provided as carefully before the great business of cutting the dress is entered upon as if a dress-maker by the day were coming to the house. It is a great saving of trouble and delay; for a dress, even when made by one’s self, can not be treated like a piece of fancy work, and taken up and put down when one “feels like it.” Unless the whole of the mind be given to it, at a stated time, the result will surely be disastrous.

Closed and even locked doors would be a wise precaution at such a momentous period as the cutting out of a dress, if one desires to wrestle with the problem alone; for pleasant conversation may cause the cutting of two backs to one front; or bits of advice (to which fallen human nature is prone) culminate in the hopeless spoiling of a sleeve. "I love you very much, but I don't want to see you for some good hours, at least," is a thought that, if spoken, would prevent many mistakes. *Sewing*, when all is "plain sailing," is a sociable employment in which fingers fly as fast as tongues; but when there is cutting out to be done; which requires thought and consideration, solitude is the best companion.

The cutting table, or a good-sized table stripped of its usual belongings, is especially necessary in dress-making; although the bed is frequently used, and needles unpleasantly discovered in the watches of the night to be sticking into the mattress. A firm, moderate-sized pin-cushion, abundantly provided with slender, sharp-pointed pins, or needles made into pins with sealing-wax, as described in a previous chapter, is also an indispensable accompaniment; and a large basket should be at hand in which to lay the separate portions of the dress as they are cut and basted. For this latter purpose, the white basting-cotton, which can be bought for six or eight cents the dozen spools, is now very generally used.

In Chapter V mention was made of two little plaits at the top of the waist in front, made in the *lining* only, which are shown in Fig. 19. A similar plait will be seen at the arm-hole, neither of which appear on the outside of the dress; and this is one of the minor points likely to be overlooked by the inexperienced dress-maker. The object of these plaits is to prevent wrinkles in the waist at those places in which they are very likely to appear. Another point for wrinkles is the waist-line of a basque, which

is also provided for by laying a plait lengthwise, as fully described before.

The proper putting in of the sleeves is full of difficulties to the novice ; and to be assured on this point, she will find it an advantage to examine the sleeves of all her ready-made dresses. They will scarcely vary from the rule of placing the top seam from two and a half to three inches *back* of the shoulder-seam, while the under seam is about two inches in *front* of the seam under the arm. The object is to have the longest part of the sleeve loose on the top of the shoulder, where length is most needed ; and to be quite sure of accomplishing this, the sleeves should be closely basted and tried on before the final sewing is done.

In putting a dress together, the backs and fronts—first carefully prepared by close basting of *their* seams—are joined, at the shoulders and under the arms, by evenly-basted seams, the waist being then tried on to see what alterations are needed. These alterations should be made with care, basting a second time if too loose or too tight, and *never* sewing until the proper fit is secured. The sleeves are not basted in until the waist is finished up to that point, as, if they are right, they can then remain to be sewed.

The stitching of the seams of a dress, a tiresome operation by hand, can be admirably done on the sewing-machine—*provided the tension is not drawn too tight*. This is a common fault with sewing-machine workers, who seem to be insatiable in their demands for speed ; but the effect of too tightly drawing the silk or thread on the waist-seams is extremely bad. The dress may have been nicely cut and fitted, but, with the seams pulled and drawn by careless machine-work, it will show innumerable little wrinkles. It is very rarely indeed that dress-making is not done altogether on the machine, and the effect, when the work is properly done, is very good.

Hand-work is as likely to be bad as machine-work ; and the dress-maker who goes out by the day often groans at the quality of the assistance that is tendered her. Such drawing of seams, and puckering of folds, and uneven plaitings, do not speak well for the skill of the worker where plain sewing is concerned ; and it is an unmanageable fact that, without being well grounded in the rudiments of sewing, no one can hope to use the needle skillfully in the more intricate mazes of dress-making. "It is of consequence to understand the different sorts of seams. All seams are ugly if they are drawn up, or shortened, by drawing the cotton too tightly. Also, it is of importance to know how to make button-holes (these, it may be observed, are exceedingly difficult to make well) ; also, how to place a string and sew on a button. In fact, it must be understood that the better a person knows how to do 'plain sewing,' the better will she be able to make dresses."

When the seams of the dress are finished, either by a machine or a close "back-stitch" by hand, the most important part is the making of button-holes and sewing on of buttons. This is sometimes done before the fronts and backs are joined, as the waist can then be tried on to better advantage. They should fasten evenly ; and great care is necessary to prevent a bulging between the button-holes, which entirely destroys the neat appearance of the dress. If the button-holes are too small for the buttons, it will be very disagreeable work to fasten them ; if too large, the effect is slovenly. The distance between should be carefully measured ; and the buttons, being sewed on the left side, are placed at about the middle of the hem, while the middle of the button-hole is in the middle of the corresponding hem on the right.

A disposition to gap apart and show white underneath is easily remedied by sewing on the wrong side of the button-front a piece of the outside material, or of ribbon to

match it in color. It is not at all necessary that this should be new.

The next point to secure is the neck, as this is apt to get stretched with much handling, unless the binding is sewed on it. The dress should be held next to the worker in sewing on this binding, which is generally finished with a collar of the material. In sewing in the sleeves, the *sleeve* should be held next to the person ; and any disposition to fullness is to be brought under the arm, as the slightest visible gather spoils the look of the sleeve. But it is still worse for the *arm-hole* to gather ; and great care should be taken, in cutting both sleeve and arm-hole, that this is not the case.

Many persons still cling to whalebones in the waist of a dress (especially stout people) ; but these are very undesirable, as, besides giving a stiff look to the figure, and preventing the dress from adjusting itself to its motions, they wear unsightly holes in the material. A disagreeable part of the work, too, is avoided by not being obliged to sew on bone-casings and cut the whalebones to fit them.

In finishing the bottom of the basque or polonaise, one should be very particular to see that the two sides are exactly alike, as no dress can look well if it is at all uneven. Seam should be laid to seam, and the tape-measure brought into requisition before the final "trimming off" is done. For making the various kinds of trimming in ordinary use, directions have already been given ; but the present fashion is to finish the waist of a dress quite plainly.

The proper looping or tying back of the skirt is not so intricate as it looks, a broad elastic placed a little back of the seams of the front breadth, and about midway the length of the back, answering most purposes. A piece of lining should always be sewed on where the elastic is fastened, as the strain upon the single material would soon tear it out.

It is a proud moment for the novice when she finds her dress nicely basted for sewing, and fitting perfectly, as she feels, very justly, that the worst of the battle is over. But unless the various details of finishing are carefully attended to, her expectations will not be realized.

For any one who expects to engage in home dress-making, and furnish, so far as may be, the various accessories of her own wardrobe, a good fashion journal will be found a valuable aid—almost, in fact, a necessary appendage. Here she will find patterns as well as “ideas,” and have the advantage of seeing the combined effect of the various directions, as shown in the fashion plate.

The great benefit of being able to make one’s own dresses is seen more particularly in cheap summer goods—of which a larger variety seems necessary than in thick materials; and the expenditure of a dollar for the calico or jaconet, and a day or so of work (most of it machine-work, of course), often produces a dress not too good for human nature’s daily use, and the admiration of all beholders.

VIII.

THE MILLINER'S ART.

MILLINERY is, perhaps, more absolutely a gift, independent of a proper graduation in plain sewing, than anything else that can be done with the needle. The neatest sewing will often produce but a humdrum affair in the way of a bonnet, while a curious jugglery of stitches and pins seems to result in "an air and a grace" that goes a long way toward perfection in this line.

Many home milliners depend upon their trimmings to give their work the right look ; and when these are plentifully used, the desired result may be attained. But it is better to make the foundation right, and in a plain bonnet this is absolutely essential. Hence the often-expressed difficulty of making a mourning bonnet nicely.

An artist in bonnets is very daring ; and the milliner's complaint—that "ladies who made their bonnets seemed to think the things could just be thrown together on them"—is not without foundation. Milliners themselves say, "Take as few stitches as possible, and depend on pins" ; but they fasten their pins firmly, and have a method in their apparent carelessness. *Their* flowers and feathers never drop out of place, while those of amateurs do ; and their bows have a peculiar twist which it is not easy to imitate.

But Miranda laughs at all this ; she brings forth a bit of velvet from one receptacle, and a bunch of roses, or a

curling feather, from another ; hums a gay tune as she seats herself in the midst of the contents—perhaps of the rag-bag—and, taking the bare frame in hand, produces in a magically short time such an admirable imitation of the old masters in French bonnets that she is the envy of all her girl acquaintances at the opera that night. Miranda, however, is a true artist ; and if the privilege of earning her own living had been bestowed upon her, the world of fashion would not dare to wear any bonnets but hers.

Every one can not be a Miranda ; but a great deal may be accomplished with some taste and much perseverance. A young lady who desires to turn some real or imaginary talent for bonnet-making to account in the family would do well to take lessons of some good milliner. She need not be afraid of the work-room, for there her experience is to be gained, and she will soon become deeply interested in the work. To make a bonnet from beginning to end, under the milliner's eye, will give her an amount of practical insight into the subject which no description could possibly impart ; and there are certain ways of doing things the knowledge of which saves a world of trouble.

The generally accepted idea in making a bonnet is, that a frame is to be bought and covered just as it is—evidently under the delusion that those who make the frames can not err. French frames, of course, are the best ; and French frames, of course, must be right. But whoever has seen a milliner who understands her business, cutting and piecing and bending, and otherwise maltreating one of these very French frames to suit the style of the person for whom it is intended, would speedily become disabused of this notion. A bonnet-frame in the hands of the expert is not, like a pin-cushion, to have a cover fitted on it just as it is ; but it may be bent in here, and pulled out there, and narrowed or deepened, until it has an entirely different expression. A milliner lately told the writer that she sel-

dom or never made up a bonnet-frame just as she received it.

But these alterations require taste and judgment, and would be decidedly rash for beginners without the advice and direction of some one who understands the matter. It will be assumed, therefore, that the frame is in readiness to be covered—a process that begins with the crown. If the material is velvet, from three eighths to half a yard, cut on the bias, will be sufficient. An entirely round piece, rather more than an inch larger than the crown, is cut out and smoothly basted in its place on the frame, the velvet being carefully pulled *away* from the bias when there is a disposition to fullness, as little plaits at this point are not desirable. A closer basting, very near the edge, is then made with the silk used in sewing the other parts of the bonnet, and the first threads are taken out.

Before putting on the fronts, the edge of the frame, over the wire, is carefully bound with soft paper, or old silk, to prevent the wire from rubbing on the velvet and making the edge shabby. This is a milliner's device not often practiced at home; and her peculiar "slip-stitch," too, is scarcely to be acquired without a lesson.

In making a velvet bonnet, it is not necessary to place anything between the outside material and the frame except on the edge.

Two fronts are cut—one for the outside and one for the inside; in some cases a binding of velvet is neatly and closely basted over the first binding, and both fronts slip-stitched to this velvet binding, while in others outside and inside are slip-stitched together without any intermediate binding. Slip-stitching is done on the right side, the needle being slipped *under* in a way that requires dexterity and practice. The stitch is also used by dress-makers in putting on folds, etc. The inside front is not quite so deep as the outside one, the silk crown-lining meeting it; and the two

are tacked together. The crown-lining is then gathered, and drawn to the proper size.

The outside front must be put on with great care, as this is the part of the bonnet that shows the most ; and a small pin here and there is better for holding it than bast-ing-threads. A smoother effect is produced by having a second piece between the front and the crown ; when this is the case, the front reaches only to the point that marks the end of the slope upward and the beginning of the slope downward for the side and back. This second piece has the edge turned under, both where it meets the front and where it goes around the crown ; and it is usually secured by a few stitches at either end, as the trimming conceals it almost entirely.

Sometimes the bonnet is so shaped that there is no opportunity for this second piece ; and a bias strip of velvet, four or five inches wide, is gathered on one side (the outside edge), and joined to the lining by turning it inside out and sewing it a little *within* the bonnet. It is then turned back over the front of the frame and plaited at the opposite edge, and fastened down at the joining of the crown. This piece is, therefore, the binding and outside front covering in one. A shirred lining of satin is suitable for a bonnet of this kind ; or the lining may be plain, and of velvet. The crown should be high, and laid in plaits at the sides, or treated like a cap-crown, and plaited all across.

Another way is to have the strings, which should be very wide, cross the crown (which is then plain), with two or three plaits in the middle and at each side. A bunch of feathers, or flowers, on the top (or at the side, if preferred), will complete the bonnet.

In finishing a bonnet, the back is turned under and slip-stitched to the back of the crown-lining. A milliner never *sews* on feathers or flowers, but pins them ; and everything depends on putting them just in the right place. A

knowledge of this precise spot comes to Miranda by intuition, while Sarah Jane gropes painfully for it, and does not find it after all.

A bonnet of thin material, such as tulle, crape, lace, etc., has an under-covering of the same material inferior in quality, a white frame being used when the covering is light, and a black one for black material.

Some people are gifted with such keen powers of observation and such naturally deft fingers that, after studying a bonnet for a short time in a milliner's window, they can produce a fac-simile in every respect, however unique the design may be; and to such, making bonnets is simply a delight. Others, while lacking this executive power, have the same amount of taste and industry; the rudiments of the mechanical process once mastered, they are ready for action; and to those a few plain suggestions, gathered from an experienced milliner, may be of use.

Making one's bonnets is almost as great a convenience as making one's dresses, and quite as great a saving, bonnet-making being a particularly remunerative occupation. The lady who makes her own bonnets is constantly appearing in new ones; and there is a strong temptation to excess in this respect. It is the fancy work of plain sewing, if such a contradiction is admissible, and is, therefore, a far more *interesting* employment than dress-making.

A gift for trimming hats and bonnets is sometimes possessed by those who yet do not venture on their manufacture; and when the article is of straw, it makes a great difference in the expense whether it is left at the milliner's to have lining, ribbon, and feathers or flowers added at her discretion, and to the increase of her bill—or brought forth partly, perhaps, from some box at home, and what is lacking purchased economically, while home fingers deftly put the component parts together.

To be able to trim one's own hats is a great convenience

in traveling, for people who like a variety ; and some ladies who can do this always prepare for a journey by stripping their hats and bonnets of every particle of trimming, and “telescoping” the naked frames together to fill some spare corner, while feathers, flowers, and ribbons are carefully placed in a box by themselves. *Their* head-gear is, of course, never tumbled at the end of the trip, but emerges as fresh as if just from the milliner’s hands, while half a dozen bonnets are carried in this manner without taking up more space than would be demanded by *one* under ordinary conditions. But this luxury is only for those who understand trimming and untrimming.

The science of MILLINERY has minor branches, and, among these, CAP-MAKING seems the most prominent. But, as a lady of the cap-making persuasion lately asseverated, one profession by no means includes the other—at least in the sense that a milliner naturally makes caps ; no, indeed—her creed only admitted that “*any* one who could make a cap could easily make a bonnet. *Plenty*,” she added, “could make a bonnet who couldn’t for the life of ’em make a cap.”

An old lady’s cap is a useful thing for one to be able to make. If there is no grandmother, or other relative, to wear it, some other old lady will always be found who can be benefited by the knowledge. It is a difficult thing to *buy* an old lady’s cap which is just what it should be, neither too grave nor too gay ; and even if the right thing were to be found, it could be made at home for just half the money.

The dingy black cap, which seems a sort of heir-loom with keepers of third-rate boarding-houses, has the alleged merit of not showing dirt ; but this, *if* a merit, is its only one. A black cap, unless tastefully made of handsome materials, as a sort of head-dress rather than a cap, is not to be endured, a simple square of plain white muslin being in every way preferable.

Professional cap-makers say that caps should be made on a block ; but this is not necessary when a foundation of stiff bobbinet is used. A slight point and depression in front is a generally becoming style ; but some prefer a perfectly straight edge. The frame, or foundation, is cut in two pieces ; and for an *old* lady, rather than an elderly one, the crown is round, and cut large enough to plait down on the front. It is in forming this crown that the block comes into use ; but the head of the wearer may be substituted, or the size taken from the crown of an old cap. The front piece should be about half a yard long and two and a half inches deep at the sides, while the point is an inch or more in width.

The outside covering is cut by the foundation, the latter taking the place of a lining ; and this foundation is neatly put together before the lace is arranged on it. Caps should be neatly made, as they require more stitches than bonnets, and it is not so easy to conceal their defects with trimming.

Wash-blonde is a very nice material for a cap of this description, which should have a thick ruching of the same around the edge and at the joining point of the front and crown, the latter being sometimes further embellished by two rows of the ruching placed lengthwise. This ruching would be less troublesome to make if wide footing is used in place of the blonde, as in using the latter it is necessary to roll the edge. A whipped roll, done with black worsted, is sometimes used ; but it is much prettier to have the cap entirely of white. The ruching is made in double box-plaits—for which three times the length is needed—and it is attached to the cap by running it on the wrong side with moderately fine cotton.

A bow and ends of the cap material ornament the back ; and the finishing touch is a pair of wide strings (also of the blonde) one yard in length, with a hem nearly three quar-

ters of an inch in depth at the sides and ends. This hem is done with very fine cotton, and the stitches are not supposed to show.

This is, of course, a very simple cap ; but it is a very suitable one, and not so plain as a straight band of tarlatan with broad strings, in which some very sweet aged faces have been framed. The materials can be varied with this shape, and white and black used in combination ; but this is a matter of taste.

More elaborate caps are made with differently shaped crowns, some being long and narrow, and others very full—double white silk tulle, with lace, ribbon, and even flowers, being used for materials. One was lately seen made of *black* tulle trimmed with ruchings of black lace, and a long spray of deep purple hyacinths.

Caps for nurses, waitresses, etc., are made of cambric or jaconet muslin, sometimes with a large crown closely gathered at the bottom and finished with a bow and ends, while the short front is pointed and trimmed with a nicely fluted ruffle. Another shape is that of a half-handkerchief tied behind with a long-ended bow, and no crown. These caps require very neat sewing ; and it will save trouble to buy one ready-made (as they are not at all expensive) and use it for a guide.

FICHUS, or CAPES, may also come under the head of Millinery, although, strictly speaking, they belong to the dress-maker's province.

A few simple rules will embrace the entire class ; and the measurements needed for cutting the pattern of a *fichu* are : the entire length, the size of the neck, the width just below the shoulders and above the arms, and the size of the chest and back.

Figs. 31 and 32 represent the pattern, for which a straight line, *a b*, for the center of the chest is first drawn. The third of the width of the neck is laid near to point *a*,

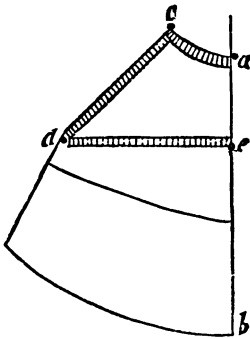


FIG. 81.—FRONT.

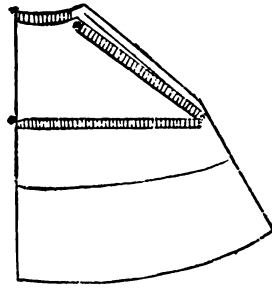


FIG. 82.—BACK.

and marked opposite at *c* at this point; the width of the shoulders is placed at the lower end, of which a quarter of the space of the shoulders is placed at *d*, and this ought to touch the front line at *e*. These different points are joined by lines drawn from each. The back is drawn on the same plan, with the exception that the sixth part of the entire neck is used instead of the third.

By rounding the shape in Fig. 83, or by making the back longer or shorter, a high or low *fichu* can be made—

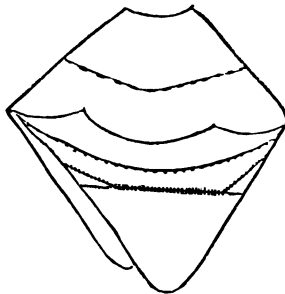


FIG. 83.—ENTIRE CAPE.

indeed, almost any shape, as will be seen by the lines in the figure.

By lengthening both back and fronts, a crossed *fichu*, with the ends tied at the back, and the fronts sloped at pleasure, can be made. These dressy capes are sometimes made by joining the back and fronts with a seam upon the shoulders ; but they can also be cut without any seam at all by folding and cutting the material on the cross.

Fichus are made of the same material as the dress, or of muslin, lace, tulle, etc.

IX.

CHILDREN'S GARMENTS.

THE same general rules apply to the cutting and making of children's clothes, except, perhaps, that in the first dainty outfit the finest and softest of materials are used, and sewed with invisible stitches—as though fairies had created the whole wardrobe instead of mortal fingers.

The LAYETTE varies with circumstances—from that of royalty on exhibition, consisting of twelve dozen of everything, to the slenderest possible store with which the morsel of humanity can make a decent appearance. A very fair supply, for people in comfortable circumstances, is: A dozen plain slips for ordinary wear, and six elaborate dresses; a dozen night-dresses; a dozen white skirts; six flannel skirts; a dozen flannel bands; one dozen cambric shirts; a thick and a thin cloak for outdoor wear; merino and lace and muslin caps for the same purpose; half a dozen pairs of socks; and hoods, blankets, knitted shawls, and various other coverings, as the devotion of friends and relatives may decide.

Patterns for all these articles may be had at any of the pattern establishments; and, in addition, it will be found a great assistance to a novice to order one ready-made garment of each kind, as all mistakes in putting together can thus be avoided.

For the plain slips, night-dresses, and under-skirts, lonsdale cambric is a good material; for the little shirts,

linen cambric ; and for the dress robes, fine nainsook muslin, or muslin with linen finish. Two yards and a half will be required for a slip or night-dress, and two and three quarters for a robe. The skirts are usually a yard long, the patterns all having the amount of material needed marked on them ; but the *lengths* are apt to be inordinate.

Very little change, except to shorten the garments and substitute flannel shirts for cambric ones, is made in a child's wardrobe until after the age of two years, the first article that obtrudes itself glaringly being the item of DRAWERS.

Fig. 8, in Chapter II, represents a very good pattern for children's drawers until they are at least five years old. After measuring the child, as in the case of a grown person, plenty of room should be allowed, as the restless little limbs will not bear the least compression ; and in putting the garment together, a different method is pursued :

The two halves are joined at the top of the front for not quite half the length, the remainder being hemmed on nthird of the distance, and closed by buttons, or strings, both sides. The back is open from the band for about a below. The hem is about an inch wide.

Later, the drawers are entirely supported by a waist, and are completely closed, with the exception of a slit on each side. The waist is furnished with buttons, and the band of the drawers has corresponding button-holes. These serve to hold the little garment firmly round the child's waist.

False hems are placed at the edges of the slits ; that on the left is placed above, and intended for the button-holes ; the hem on the right receives the buttons, and, consequently, is crossed under the other.

This pattern also answers for little boys' trousers, when slits are made to admit of pockets being added. When the drawers or trousers are large at the lower ends, the extremi-

ties are gathered and fastened into bands. These bands can have elastics run in them (for trousers); and they are always arranged to fasten beneath the child's knee.

These little trousers can be trimmed in various ways—with rows of buttons, or braid, down the sides, or whatever happens to be worn.

Charming patterns for CHILDREN'S DRESSES of all descriptions—both girls and boys—as well as the dresses themselves, are to be had at the furnishing stores; but there are few prettier garments for a little girl than the Gabrielle dress. It is cut, like the Princess, all in one, and has an ease and grace peculiarly its own. This is cut almost exactly like a deep sacque; the back has a seam on each side that reaches the shoulder, but none in the center (unless for an older child than four or five); each front has, very near the hem, a seam, like a dart, reaching the shoulder, where it joins the back side-seam.



FIG. 34.—DRESS OF WHITE CAMBRIC.

The dress is buttoned from the neck to the bottom, and may be trimmed in any way desired. Plain and exceedingly

comfortable little dresses of calico, gingham, or thicker cheap materials, can be made from this pattern, and also very elaborate ones.

Two very pretty yoked dresses for young children are given below, the styles being taken from "Harper's Bazar." Fig. 34 is made of white cambric, with a square yoke at the top, to which back and front are gathered, and also gathered at the waist. The borders that trim it are strips of white lace—striped piqué—embroidered with two shades of red cotton, as shown in Fig. 35. The cross-seam

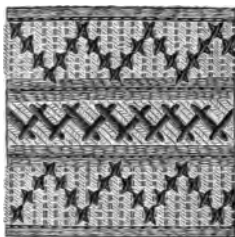


FIG. 35.—EMBROIDERY FOR DRESS.

on the solid stripe of the fabric, which forms the middle of the border, is in the lighter shade; and the cross-stitches on the open-work, or lace stripe on each side, are in the darker. Narrow embroidered edging finishes the sleeves, the front, and the bottom of the dress. A ribbon sash is attached at the side-seams.

Fig. 36 represents a very pretty dress of white baptiste, or nun's veiling, the waist of which is tucked, and the top edged with wide embroidery. This is joined to a yoke composed of alternate bands of lace and embroidered insertion. The skirt is side-plaited, and edged with similar embroidery, which is headed by a cluster of tucks. The neck and the short puffed sleeves are trimmed with lace insertion, through which narrow pink *gros grain* ribbon is drawn in and out; and a broad sash of the same ribbon completes the dress.

A HOOD and CAPE made in one is a very useful thing for children ; and this is done by folding a square of mate-



FIG. 36.—DRESS OF NUN'S VEILING.

rial on the cross, so that it forms a double fichu. One of these fichus or capes is placed on the head, the corner falling over the forehead ; the other covers the shoulders. It will be necessary to make some plaits upon the line which separates the actual hood from the cape, and also to fasten the hood under the chin by a clasp or ribbon. This simple form may be improved on, and the hoods lined or wadded, as may be desired. The shape is a very becoming one for a grown person.

The pattern in Fig. 37 has the back made very large and the front exceedingly narrow—so narrow, in fact, as to be almost imperceptible. The back—which is cut on the cross, through the center, and the entire shape rounded—is drawn together by a very full gathering, although the cap itself is tight to the head. In order to make this gathering, the outline of the back ought to be a third larger than the edge of the front.

This style can be varied by dispensing altogether with the front, and making the cap entirely of a back like the above, kept firmly round the head by a gathering. This class of cap is generally surrounded by a full trimming either of lace or ribbon.

The back made smaller, and formed either by a broad

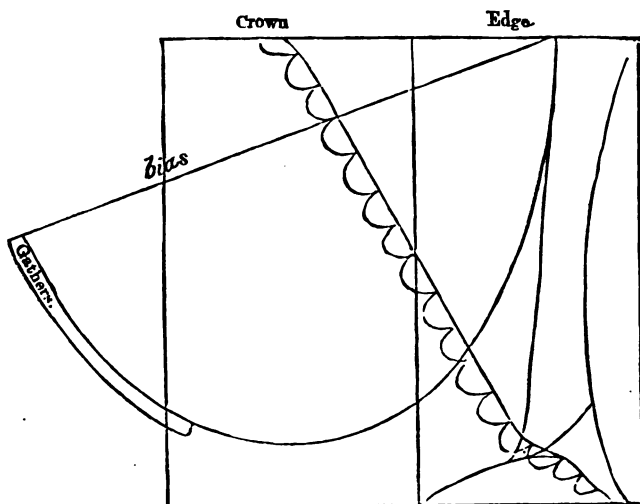


FIG. 37.—CAP AND HOOD.

lace gathered and rounded as a shell, or a piece of lace laid upon a back of tulle, covering only half the head, and trimmed with some knots of ribbon, forms a pretty head-dress for an elderly lady.

The CHILD'S CAP in Fig. 38 is made in three pieces: *e* is the front made lower in height; the piece *f* is the back, which is larger than the front. To cut these out, two pieces of stuff must be prepared after piece *e*; the back is placed upon the stuff folded double and on the straight,

the line *g h* resting upon the fold. The material cut after the pattern of this back is in one piece, which is like a

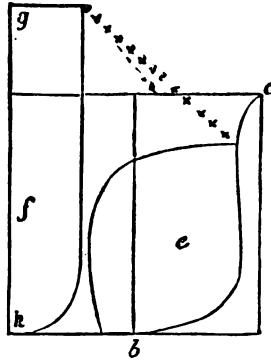


FIG. 83.—CHILD'S CAP.

band, of which the end *h* (of the back) will be narrower than the front, *b*. This band will be sewed between the two pieces *e*, gathering slightly the space which surrounds the slope of these several pieces.

HOUSE-LINEN.

THERE is a fashion in the making of HOUSE-LINEN,—sheets, pillow-cases, table-covers, etc.—as in other things; the size and elaboration of such articles have increased wonderfully of late years, and the lady who was in the habit of using her teeth in the desperate struggle of establishing a pillow in a fresh case would find, in the broad, easy coverings of the present day, no necessity for such extreme measures.

“In the old days,” says a modern writer, “housewives used to pride themselves upon the quantity and quality of the house-linen stored in their presses, handed down from mother to daughter—each adding to the stock. Many a long year ago this custom passed away, and a scantily-adequate supply was purchased by a newly-married couple, used, discarded, and replaced again and again, before the daughter’s day came. Fashion has now taken the matter in hand, and, as everything in our modern houses must be superfluous, house-linen has, at last, received its turn, and no effort is spared to make it as elaborate and costly as possible; and, in æsthetic houses, each bed-chamber shows a distinct style of beauty of workmanship and delicacy of material.”

HOUSE-LINEN consists of chamber-linen, or bedding: sheets, pillow-cases, bolster-cases, towels. Table-linen: table-cloths, side-cloths, table-napkins. *Pantry and kitchen-linen*: aprons, towels, table-cloths, etc.

The making of SHEETS depends somewhat upon the quality of the material used, and the quantity is greater for best sheets than for ordinary ones. A *scant* sheet, however, is a miserable affair, and it had better be coarser in texture than not to have enough of it.

The ordinary measure for the length of sheets is from three to three and a half yards. This length is used for double-width material; for single-width it should be twice as long. From two and a half to three yards in width is allowed with this length; but, aside from these general rules, the size of sheets should be in proportion to that of the bed for which they are intended, a liberal allowance being made for tucking in at the foot and sides, and turning down at the top. Three eighths over the size of the bed in length will answer for ordinary sheets.

For single beds, a length of from two and a half yards to two and three quarters is sufficient. Wide material is preferable for several reasons: it looks better, feels better, and is less trouble to make, a hem at top and bottom being all that is needed. The upper hem should be from two to two and a half inches deep, and the lower one inch. It is quite common to see them both of the same moderate depth, and this, in addition to the lack of marking, renders it impossible, in making the bed, to distinguish the upper sheet from the under one. A very untidy way of doing things, and it is almost equally untidy not to mark such articles.

The mark is placed at the top hem, either in the center of the sheet or at one end, the letters, for ordinary wear, being made with indelible ink, and, for better articles, with white or red embroidery-cotton. Very beautiful marking is done in this style, which comes under the head of fancy work. Linen sheets are always worth marking well.

It is not necessary to make extra large sheets where economy is needful, but it is necessary to make them large enough for comfort. In making linen sheets, a method is

suggested which seems to combine economy and a good appearance. This is done by using two different qualities of material—one of ordinary and the other of better linen, the latter being intended for the sides of the bed. One way of managing this combination is to have a width of the better and a width of the commoner material, the former being split and joined to each side of the other; while a second method is to put the better material as a border around that which is coarser or commoner. The last plan is the more economical, one width of fine linen, cut in two, being sufficient for a pair of sheets.

The work, however, is to be considered, four seams in all being required to join the edges to the center, and the patched appearance of such a sheet would certainly detract from its elegance. The same expenditure of money and loss of time would procure a whole sheet, of a quality finer than the center and coarser than the edges; but the idea is given for the benefit of those who may fancy putting it in practice.

Linen is, of course, the handsomest, and, in warm weather, the most comfortable material for sheets, but it is not indispensable, and, with the thermometer in the region of zero, either below or above, the feeling of it is indescribably icy, so that many who use it in summer discard it, on hygienic principles, in winter. A straight piece of linen, as long as the bed is wide, and about three quarters of a yard in depth, is often used to turn over the quilt after the bed is made. This is sometimes finished only with a plain broad hem, and the monogram handsomely worked above it—sometimes with the addition of a fluted ruffle, and sometimes it is elaborately embroidered.

PILLOW-CASES naturally follow sheets, and of the variety of these there is no end, according to the shape of the pillows. These are sometimes long and sometimes three-cornered, but more frequently square.

The pillow-case proper, which receives the pillow like a bag, should correspond perfectly with the size of the pillow, taking care that the latter shall slip in and out with ease, as a pillow that has to be stuffed into its case is disagreeable in every way. If the senseless economy is practiced of scanting the pillow-case in length, a constant gaping open and display of ticking will be the result. To avoid this danger, it is better to have the opening at the back of the pillow instead of the end, sufficiently deep hems being made on each edge for buttons and button-holes, four of which will be required on the ordinary square pillow.

Single covers, known as "shams," are also provided for day-time use, and these are often very elaborate. A square of fine linen, with five tucks above the hem and a fluted ruffle outside, gives a very nice finish to a pillow; but thin material, lined with pink or blue silesia and trimmed with lace, is often used to match a quilt or counterpane.

A very simple pillow-sham, which has the advantage of being partly a pillow-case, is made by taking a piece of material a seam or so over the size of the pillow, and two other pieces five inches square. (A little more will do no harm.) Each of these squares is folded across the bias and cut, making four three-cornered pieces; one of these is basted in each corner of the large piece, corner to corner. A facing two inches wide is basted along the edges of the sham—a ruffle for fluting being placed between—and this is stitched down on the outer edge, while the inner one, corners and all, is simply hemmed. This sham will slip over the pillow and *stay* there, the corners of the pillow fitting into the corners of the sham, without pins or any other device for fastening these eternally slipping and sliding deceptions.

TOWELS can scarcely be too numerous, as an abundant supply of these articles seems to be at the root of all cleanliness and order. Many different qualities, too, are needed,

from the handsomely embroidered and fringed affair to lay over the towel-rack in the best bedroom, to the crash roller behind the kitchen-door.

The needle seems, at first sight, to have very little to do with these, and often it has less to do than it should have. Fringed towels, unless overcast with white cotton where the fringe begins, will soon ravel further in a very uneven way, which spoils the looks of the handsomest article; and a worked initial or monogram at one end is a great improvement. Old table-cloths are sometimes made into towels for common use, and these are very soft and pleasant. They require hemming all around. From a yard to a yard and a quarter in length is considered a good size.

Kitchen towels are usually a yard long, with a hem at each end and a loop on one corner. Crash of different qualities, according to the purpose for which they are designed, is the ordinary material.

TABLE-CLOTHS.—These, from a simple white covering for the dining-room table, may be made articles of extreme luxury. Wide damask linen is used for this purpose, and may be purchased either by the yard or in the complete bordered cover. In the latter case there is often a fringe besides, which gives a very handsome finish.

There are few articles, says an authority upon the subject, in which there is a greater variety than in table-cloths. Those intended for large dinners, etc., can be, and are, very costly, having in some cases the crest, monogram, etc., woven in the pattern of the damask in the center of the cloth, which is, of course, in one piece. Table-linen such as this, having generally sets of table-napkins to correspond, is an heir-loom in the family for which it has been made.

Cloths, however, intended for ordinary use, are two and a half and three yards in length, the width being in proportion to the length. These are for the usual long dining-

table. Those intended for a round table should be perfectly square. They will require hemming on two sides.

A damask table-cloth will have a much richer appearance with a heavy cloth underneath. This is, of course, provided by the indefatigable furnishing stores at a largely added expense ; but frugal housekeepers have experimented successfully with heavy sheeting and white Canton-flannel. The preference is given to the latter, and two breadths are stitched together and fastened to the table, so that it can not possibly wrinkle. The thick covering need not descend below the table, and, by using this device, "a handsome table-cloth looks even nicer than it is ; and an old one may be made to do good service for a long time after it has become thin from constant wear and washing."

SIDE-CLOTHS are of the same material as the table-cloth, but only one width wide. They are placed on the large cloth during dinner, but withdrawn after the dessert. They are made by the same rules as for the large table-cloths.

SERVIETTES, or NAPKINS, should match the pattern of the table-cloth as nearly as possible, and in goods of a handsome quality they come together in sets of a dozen or more napkins to each table-cloth. Napkins are cut exactly square, and hemmed at the ends.

The store of napkins should be abundant ; clean, glossy napkins being as indispensable to a well-ordered dining-table as a spotless cloth. In ancient times they were often made of silk and fringed with gold ; but this magnificence was necessarily at the expense of cleanliness. Still farther back, there were napkins which, after being used, were thrown into the fire, instead of the wash-tub, for the purpose of being cleansed. These were woven of asbestos or some other incombustible fiber, and as the fire simply

burned off the soil, they emerged from it white and purified.

But, alas ! there is no manufactory for asbestos napkins nowadays, and perishable damask requires both sewing and soapsuds to fit it for use and keep it in a usable state.

XI.

THE MENDING BASKET.

To know how to darn, patch, and repair partly-worn garments is quite as important a department of home needle-work as their original manufacture ; and it is a curious circumstance that many of the stitches employed in these homely occupations are valuable in the higher realms of art embroidery.

Some one very truly says that, possessing thoughtful intelligence, "everything which a woman has learned to do with her needle, from her childhood up, comes into play in her embroidery. She may button-hole, or darn, or back-stitch, or run, or cab-stitch, or hem-stitch, or underlay, or patch, and every one of these domestic processes may be invaluable in giving variety and expression to her embroidery. I know one beautiful piece of needle-work where, between masses of roses, ranging from white to crimson, there are spaces of cross-darning in two shades of silk, which carry the color in a wonderful way ; and when I commended the originality of the treatment, the clever girl who did it answered, simply, 'Yes, mamma was darning stockings, and I thought the stitch was lovely.'"

But, even when applied solely to the ends for which it was intended, there is a positive beauty in the evenness and regularity of such work as patching and darning, besides the intense satisfaction of rescuing still longer from the rag-bag garments that have cost no small amount of time and money in their construction. A cheap, poor article is

seldom worth patching ; it is better economy to supply its place with a new one. Neither is a garment that has many thin places, for these will soon be dragged into holes by the patches. Linen is worth mending almost as long as it will hold together, for nothing is more delightful wear during a heated term than old linen. It is worth mending well, too, and deserves the finest and most durable of work. Holes that are "caught together," instead of having a piece properly set in, are soon gaping open again ; and darning that covers only the worst of a worn place makes the surrounding part worse than ever. Darning and patching are not to be done at hap-hazard, but according to a regular process, like any other species of needle-work ; and the following rules and illustrations, from the little English work referred to, will be found a valuable assistance :

The first class of repairs is **DARNING**, of which there are many sorts, which can be classed thus : 1. A plain darn. 2. A crossed darn. 3. An opened or figured darn. 4. The

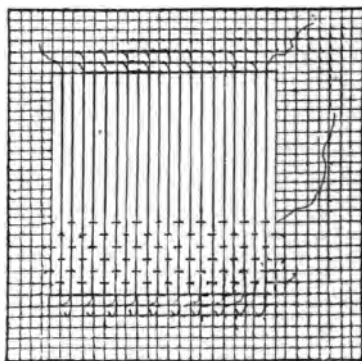


FIG. 39.—PLAIN DARN.

invisible or joined darn. All these are made at the **back** of the article to be repaired.

For all darns, a warp and a woof have to be formed ; a

flat thread, whether cotton, flax, or silk, and always finer than the material itself, is used.

The PLAIN DARN (Fig. 39) is used to repair a rent, fixing a woof and a warp. Before commencing this, the edges of the worn or torn part should be made even; often it is well to form the torn part into a *square*. Then the threads for the warp are arranged in the length of the article to be mended. The threads are laid close together, no interval being allowed between them. The needle making the warp raises and flattens alternately the two edges of the tear; that is to say that, first, it will pass *under* the edge in order to come out at a distance of two or three threads beyond, and, in returning, the needle will pass *over* this edge in order to slip under that which is opposite. This is to be continued until the warp fills the hole.

The woof is made in the opposite direction to the warp. The needle carries the thread through the former, raising and lowering alternately each thread. This is again reversed at each turn, the needle always taking up the thread

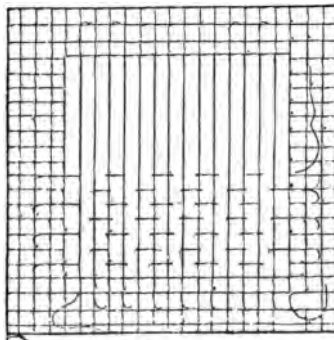


FIG. 40.

which has been previously left below. To form a very even woof, the needle must press the threads, from time to time,

closer together. This will not be necessary unless a very close darn is required. The edges should be flattened by the thimble.

Fig. 40 differs from the last only because the warp, in-

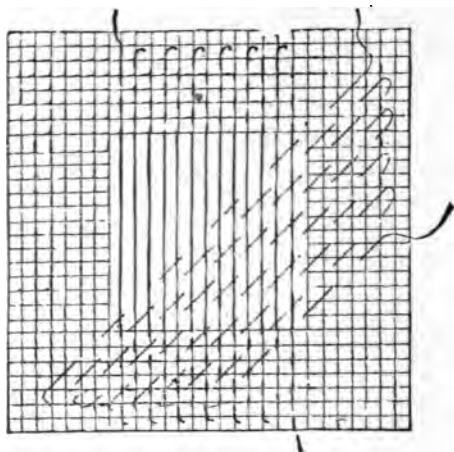


FIG. 41.

stead of being formed thread by thread, is, on the contrary, made by taking *two* threads upon the needle and leaving one beneath. The thread left in the first row is, in the second, taken on the needle with one of those already taken up. The third and following rows are made like the second, only alternating the threads.

Fig. 41 is a **CROSSED DARN** on the **CROSS**. This is done by forming the woof on the cross. The first thread of this is taken through the warp in the center of the tear, in order to divide the hole into two equal parts, felling first one half and then the other. By this method greater regularity is obtained in the stitches. The worn part should be fitted over a small piece of oil-cloth, or a card, to give greater firmness for the darning.

An OPEN or FLATTENED DARN is shown in Fig. 42. This is done like a crossed darn. It is in the woof that the

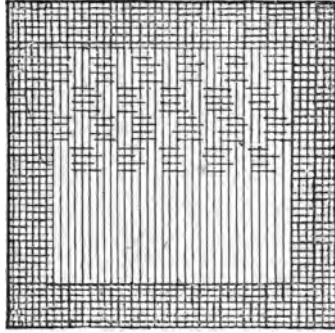


FIG. 42.

pattern has to be imitated. Two, three, or four threads are taken upon the needle, according to the required pattern, then the usual crossed woof is continued—that is to say, when there is one, because often the patterns of checks, stripes, etc., form a perfect ground of themselves.

The HIDDEN or JOINED DARN (Fig. 43) is only used where the edges of the tear can be joined naturally, or in a species of patching which will be described later.

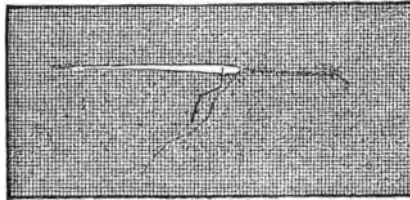


FIG. 43.

In all these repairs care must be taken to equalize the edges, or to cut away the raveled threads which are generally

met with, and thus to render the mending almost invisible. For a hidden repair, it is useless to make a warp ; the edges are simply joined in the woof. This will be quite simple for linen, and crossed in other stuffs. In other materials, it is sometimes necessary to use the raveled threads of the stuff in order to carry on the different shades in the material. When *cloth* is to be repaired, only half the thickness is worked upon.

PATCHING and PIECING form another branch of repairs. There are three kinds of patching :

1. Patching by overcasting.
2. Ditto with a turned-down seam.
3. Ditto by darning or joining.

As a general rule, when a garment requires a patch, the torn part must be taken away, with all the worn part near, until sufficient resistance is found in the material of which the garment is made to support the new piece placed on it. The hole into which the patch has to be placed is to be cut straight and quite square. About a quarter of an inch ought to be allowed all round the new piece, in order to make the seam. Except for a darned patch, it is requisite to cut a little notch of some four to six threads in depth in the corners of the square hole out of which the old piece has been taken. If the material to be patched has a pattern, care must be taken to make that on the new piece exactly correspond to that on the article itself.

AN OVERCASTING PATCH (Fig. 44) is made by laying a little fold at the back to the depth of the notches upon the edge of the rent. A similar fold is made upon the patch itself, and, tacking that upon the part to be repaired, it is to be overcast all round, care being taken to keep the parts clear of each other, and to do the corners neatly. The seam is then flattened down by the thimble, and the edges turned under and lightly over-sewn.

This style of patching, although often employed for

linen, is especially used in other materials. There is also another way of piecing by overcasting, intended for worn

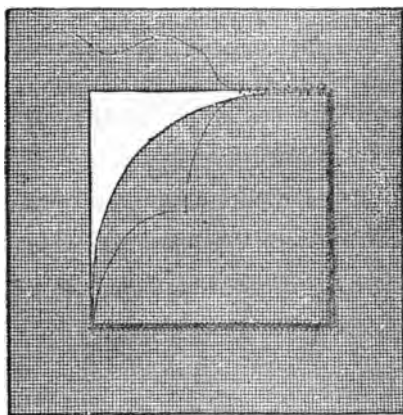


FIG. 44.

linen and thick stuff. For this, the worn or torn part, which has to be cut away, is left until the piece has been laid upon it and overcast or sewn there. Before sewing, it should be carefully basted all around. The torn part, cut away on the wrong side, should have enough allowed all around its edges to make a good turned-down seam, with which this kind of patch is often finished.

PIECING BY A TURNED-DOWN SEAM is prepared like the above, and sewed either by overcasting or running, so that the right side (or where the stitches are placed) is always found above the turned-down seam. In this patch the corners are very difficult to form, and, done by unpracticed hands, they are sure to "pucker."

It is just this detail which forms the greatest difficulty in patching. In order to make the corners well, it is necessary to keep to the straight thread for the seam; and, when the notch is arrived at, care must be taken to seize with the

last stitch the last thread of the woof or the warp, following the course of the sewing into the side of the notch, and never a thread beyond. In order to sew the next side, the first stitch is taken with the first thread in the notch in the opposite side, and this process is repeated for each corner. When the piece on the back, or wrong side, is sewn, the flattened seam is then made, folding the edge down upon the article mended. (See Fig. 45.)

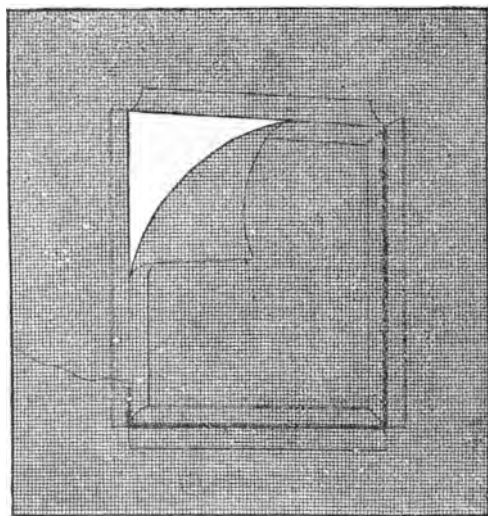


FIG. 45

Fig. 46. **PIECING BY A SEAM.**—This is rarely used for linen, except when it is necessary to repair something very fine, which has been torn by accident and not by wear. It is serviceable in very clear stuffs, such as muslin, etc., when there is only a little tear. It is frequently used in other materials, especially in woolen, and always in cloth stuffs.

In order to place these last-mentioned stitches, it is useless to cut notches in the sides, as the patch is cut exactly to the same size as that taken away; about the depth of two or three threads may be left half-way round the piece, so as to make a tiny turning by which to fit it into the hole. It is kept in its place by the aid of a tuck like a darn, and then the stitches are joined by the invisible stitch. The thread used for this ought to be finer than that of the cloth material. In cloth, a fine sewing-silk is used, and only half the thickness of the cloth is sewed. When the piece is sewn in, the work is turned on the right side so as to slightly raise with the needle the nap of the cloth upon all its repaired sides. This renders the patch completely invisible, and after this it is requisite to pass a hot iron over the sewed edges at the back, as this greatly improves the appearance of the repair. (Fig. 46.)

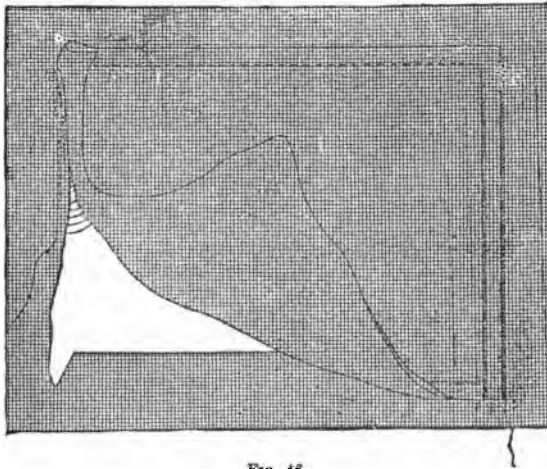


FIG. 46.

DARNING STOCKINGS is perhaps the most constantly-recurring phase of mending in ordinary use, and the stock-

ing-bag, with all proper accompaniments, is one of the accessories of the sewing-room or work-basket. This bag is usually made of bright-colored chintz, with pasteboard at the front and back and a puffing of the material between. On the outside of one half is a needle-book, and on the other a pocket. The needle-book is well stocked with large needles of graduated sizes, from the huge darning-needle to its youngest brother; and the pocket contains darning-cotton of various colors and qualities. The inside of the bag affords abundant room for the stockings—supposing that they are mended, as they should be, once a week.

Frequently stockings are left for the convenient season that never comes, and, when this is the case, they have a steady way of accumulating that is utterly disheartening. A sudden raid is made upon the bag when any are needed, and the most promising pair fished from its depths, but the kind of darning done under such circumstances is not one that would figure well in fancy work.

To darn stockings well one must not hurry over them, and for this reason there is no better work to pick up for a long chat with one's "familiar," or a steady thinking. The neatness of the work depends on the closeness and regularity with which the "warp and woof" cross and recross each other, and the careful manner in which the threads are joined to the edges of the hole. Some skillful workers will take stockings with dreadfully gaping toes and heels and make things of beauty of them by their exquisite darning; while others "botch" the simplest hole, as though to stop it, however temporarily, were the sole object in view.

Many persons use a wooden or china egg in darning stockings, others use the old-fashioned mock-orange, while a still greater number merely stretch the stocking over the hand while working on it. Whichever of these methods is most convenient to the person at work is the best one to follow.

“A hole may be the accident of a day, but a darn is premeditated poverty,” is a maxim that does not deter the careful housewife from trying to make old clothes look almost as well as new ; but mending is work that requires great care and patience, and most people declare that they would rather make an entirely new garment than repair a portion of an old one. Some, again, are *born* menders, and lay each patch so tenderly, and darn so evenly, that the humble task becomes in their hands a work of art.

Many works of art have no higher foundation ; for very beautiful things may be accomplished in simple darning, and, when properly used, the stitch is a very effective one. Much pretty work has been done with darning on Brussels net, and it is likely to come into still more general use. So every pair of stockings well darned may be considered a step in the direction of art-embroidery, and the thorough performance of an uncongenial task an apprenticeship to the rudiments of a higher and more agreeable occupation. For the best art work is only made complete by a careful attention to details, and she who can patch and darn satisfactorily has already made progress in the right direction.

XII.

A PATCHWORK CHAPTER.

OF late years the feminine world has run very much to patchwork of various kinds—not exactly the patchwork of our grandmothers and their daughters, perhaps, who spent their odd moments (and many, too, that were not odd) in piecing together infinitesimal scraps of calico, feeling abundantly repaid for all this weary labor by the rising suns, stars, points, and fox-and-geese patterns which adorned the quilts of their best bed-chambers.

Modern patchwork scorns these humble materials, and arrays itself gorgeously in silk and velvet. Much of it is very handsome, and admirably calculated for “company work,” and work to pick up when one is out of sorts with ordinary employments. A silk quilt, or *couvre pied*, is a particularly comfortable affair, being light, soft, and sufficiently warm; while the bright, well-arranged colors please the eye and relieve the whiteness of the ordinary coverlet.

Patchwork may be called the fancy work of plain sewing, the same stitches being used for its execution; while the arrangement of color and pattern take off the monotony which the making of under-garments and house-linen produces. It is essentially the occupation of the HOME NEEDLE, and therefore not foreign to the other subjects of these pages, while its general popularity demands some mention in a book of this nature.

Before beginning a silk quilt, it will be well to take ac-

count of stock in the way of scraps and pieces, not forgetting that ribbons are equally serviceable, and that very shabby ones may be induced to take on quite a fresh appearance by a judicious application of ammonia and hot iron. *Ugly* silks and ribbons, if sufficiently light, can be dyed any desirable color. Figured material should be discarded if the quilt is to be a handsome one.

A great deal of silk will be needed, and some patterns require more of one kind than some others; buying will be found expensive and begging precarious. Fortunately, there is a strong chord of sympathy between people who have made silk patchwork and those who are about to make it, and the former class are always ready to help the latter. Donations of silks pour in from various quarters; an obliging milliner, perhaps, contributes a valuable package; the dress-maker empties her rag-bag; this one and that one open their hoards, until finally there is a goodly-sized box full. This store should be carefully sorted, and made into bundles of each color and shade.

The LOG-CABIN pattern (see Fig. 47) is the least work, and perhaps, on the whole, the most effective of the various patterns used. In sewing the pieces together, the quilt is wadded and quilted at the same time, and, as the running-stitch is used instead of the more tedious overhand, the work is in every respect lessened. Before making a beginning, it will be necessary to provide an old cotton garment, that can be torn into squares for the lining, and some sheet-wadding.

Five and a half inches is a pretty size for the squares, and to begin one of these, first crease a square of muslin from end to end, *on the bias*, both ways. This gives the central point, and on this is to be placed the center of a small square of black velvet—size, one inch and three quarters. This center is the same in every block. The blocks are made of two shades of one color, as represented

in the light and dark of the illustration. About a yard in length is required for the light, and something like an

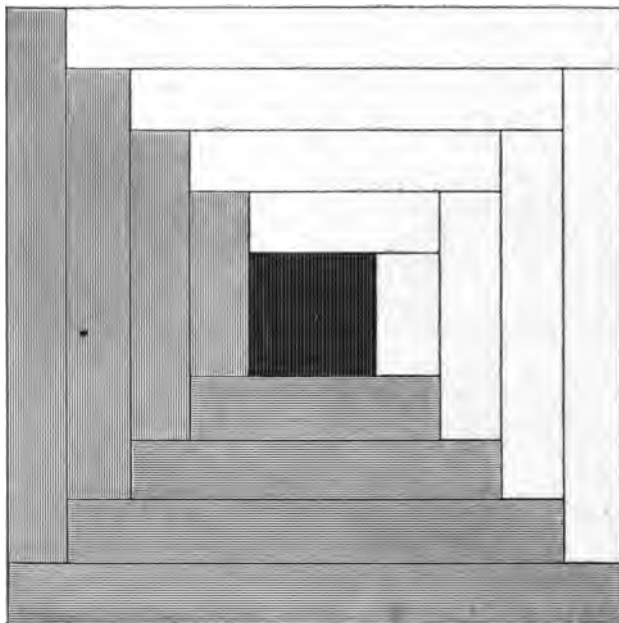


FIG. 47.

eighth more for the dark. The width of these strips, as cut, is *rather* more than three quarters of an inch, to allow a good seam on both sides. All these measurements include seams.

The wadding is cut in strips *about* the width of the silk, and, before beginning to sew, it will be best to prepare several foundation-pieces, several velvet centers, a number of silk strips, and several lengths of the wadding. Neither silk nor wadding should be cut off until joined to the foundation. Sewing-silk of the same shades, or nearly the same,

as the silk, and about letter "B" in quality, will look best, and wear best, for sewing the quilt.

Having carefully basted the velvet square in the center, begin with the lighter shade of silk, and run a strip (with the wrong side up) on one side of the velvet. Then lay a strip of wadding on this, turn up the silk (with the wadding under) on the right side, and baste down. A second strip of light silk, beginning at the edge of the last strip and leaving off at the edge of the velvet, is treated in the same way; then follow two strips of dark; then two more strips of light; and so on, until eight of each have quite covered the foundation-square. When this is done, all bastings, except those on the outer strips, can be removed.

A glance at the illustration will make this process quite plain; but, in joining the blocks together, there is great variety of taste. Four blocks are formed into one by closely back-stitching together on the wrong side, and joining all the dark shades, then sewing these in stripes by putting the light shades together. An afghan made in this style is in the writer's possession, and the effect is very handsome.

Another way of putting them together is to make four blocks exactly alike and join them by the light shades, finishing the large square with a border all around of black silk, like a picture-frame. A third style is to have light and light, dark and dark, face each other in the same square, with the velvet center between; and this is more like the real log-cabin.

Some, again, make "mosaic" patchwork of this same pattern by using different colors in the rows; and this is much more economical than the former, as it requires only small scraps. It is often very pretty, but the squares should be small.

The proper bordering for such a quilt or afghan is black velvet to match the centers, but, as this is quite expensive,

a black ribbon, ornamented with feather-stitching in embroidery-silk, may be substituted. An old silk dress makes a very nice outer lining, but, where this is not to be had, silesia answers very nicely, and has the advantage of not slipping off when in use. If greater warmth is desired, an additional thickness of wadding may be placed between the inner and outer lining, and this may be fastened down by stitches at the four corners of a diamond, the stitches being concealed by tiny bows of narrow ribbon to match the lining.

In this kind of patchwork, ribbon, even when only wide enough for a single strip, can be used to as good advantage as silk, and it is a perpetual surprise to see discarded neckties and bows and ends of ribbon appear so well in the finished work.

When a peculiar color of silk or ribbon is found impossible to match for the darker shade, black may be substituted in its place, as it gives the patchwork a richer look to be rather dark than light.

Every one knows the old TEA-CHEST pattern, the very beginning of the patchwork mania—that slanting, dazzling perplexity, “to one thing constant never”—now straight, now slanting, now chests with lids, now diamonds of velvet and silk, but always tedious, and almost impossible to make *even* at the corners. The multitudinous colors, too, were blinding.

Very pretty effects, though, can be produced with this same pattern by using only the black velvet or black silk diamond, and two differing shades of the same color. Sometimes an entire piece of work is done with but two colors, two shades of each color being used, and black velvet giving a much richer look than silk. This is the handsomest kind of tea-chest patchwork that can be made, and it looks well on sofa-cushions, chair-covers, etc.

A diamond-shape, three inches long by two in width

across the center, should be cut out in paper for this patchwork, and the next step is to take the paper pattern to a tinman and get him to cut a duplicate in tin, which will be a safer guide than the paper, as the latter is apt to get trimmed off or torn at the edges. Each silk or velvet diamond is to be stiffened with thin pasteboard, which must not be removed until the sewing is finished—quite a laborious piece of work. The covering must be carefully turned over the edges with a good seam and basted down; the sides are then joined by close overhanding with sewing-silk.

A silk quilt of any kind can not have a handsomer finish than a broad black velvet ribbon around the edge. Many, however, are merely *bound* with black or colored ribbon.

The STAR PATTERN can be made of six of these same diamonds joined, with the points out on all sides, but the rays are usually larger:

A beautiful quilt of this pattern was made by a young lady who had access, through a friend, to the sample-books of a large silk house. These sample-books are especially adapted to patchwork, and the stars made from them were each in six shades of one color, separated by black velvet. The result was a covering fit for royalty itself.

A KALEIDOSCOPE QUILT is a trial of patience, being a collection of tiny diamonds and half-diamonds stiffened with paper and sewed together over and over. No method is observed in regard to color, except to make it as bright as possible. As an economizer of everything but time remarked, "It uses up the scraps so nicely!"

The OCTAGON PATTERN, although only six-sided, as shown in Fig. 48, has long been a great favorite, and the six pieces which compose the ring may have a center of either black or white. If of the latter, a few long stitches of embroidery silk in some simple device is a great improvement. These pieces may be of all colored silks, arranged

with some regard for harmony, or each ring may be of one color, or every colored piece in the quilt may be alike. As the rings are separated by black, this last method has a very

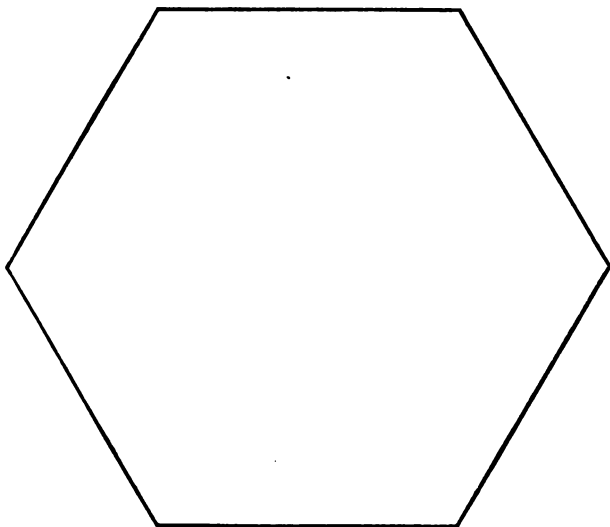


FIG. 48.

handsome effect with pink silk and white centers, the latter loosely worked with some pale blue stitches. A discarded pink silk party dress furnished the bright-colored material for a very charming quilt on this plan.

The outline figure in the illustration gives the real dimensions of this pattern, which are a fraction over two inches from one straight side to the other, and three inches crossing that line from point to point.

Many things will suggest patterns for patchwork, and among them stained-glass windows, tiles, and mosaics, while some embroidery patterns answer the purpose admirably. Fig. 49, taken from an old English embroidered quilt, could

be very handsomely arranged for silk and velvet, with small pieces of white silk between to simulate the ground-work.

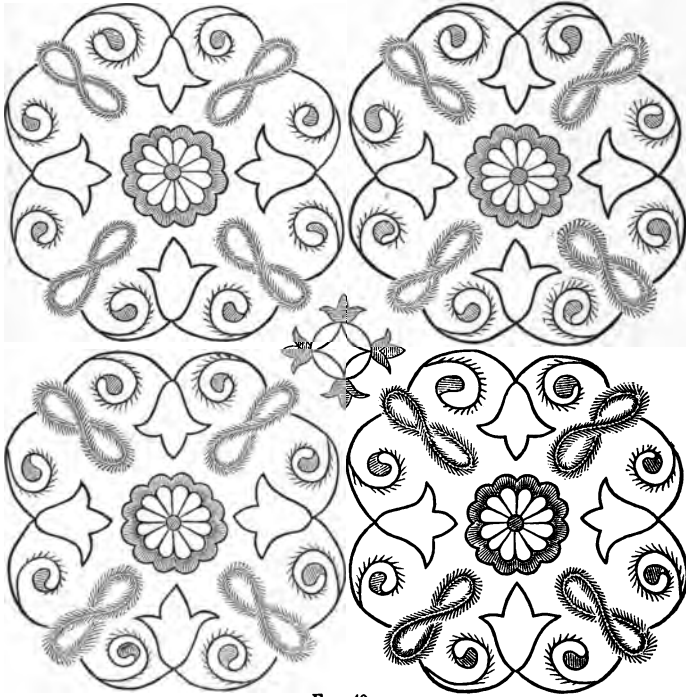


FIG. 49.

Another very pretty quilt could be made by taking an old silk dress (if one has it to take) and dividing it into stripes, squares, oblongs, etc., with narrow strips of silk or ribbon of a darker shade, and edging these strips with herring-bone or feather-stitch. But this sounds like wandering out of plain needle-work into the regions of fancy work and embroidery.

All these quilts or afghans, with the exception of the

log-cabin pattern, have to be lined and quilted after the patchwork is done; and in olden times this portion of the work was a formidable affair, with the unwieldy quilting-frame and heavy tea-drinking to the assisting neighbors, which seemed an indispensable part of it. The patchwork covering should not be quilted, but caught down at corners or points, and quilted silk for lining can now be bought by the yard.

In using a cheaper lining, the quilting need not be made a very difficult matter. A large table (like an extension dining-table) should be at hand, and on this the lining is first to be laid right side down. The wadding is then placed on the lining and tacked to it in rows. Each breadth may be done separately for greater convenience. For quilting, the lining is turned outside and either basted or marked where the stitches are to go, the lines crossing each other in squares or diamonds of an inch or more. These lines are then to be closely run with silk either by hand or on the sewing-machine.

The outside of the quilt is then joined to the lining, and finished just as it would have been without any quilting.

There is more to be had out of the contents of the rag-bag than is ever dreamed of in the philosophy of some housekeepers, and people of limited means may make available almost every stray scrap.

In making silk patchwork, all the bits that are left may be converted into SILK CARPET-RAGS; not that they are ever used for carpets, but for curtains and *portières*—sometimes for mats. They are woven, knitted, or crocheted, and the most disreputable-looking odds and ends of silk or ribbon are available for this purpose. First, however, they are sewed together like ordinary carpet-rags, but the *modus operandi* is clearly described in the following paragraph:

“A curtain can be made of scraps of silk which will be very effective if woven in with a proper regard for the

color effect. It is necessary to cut the silk into strips about half an inch wide (a little more or less makes no difference), either straight or on the bias. Sew the pieces together strongly and roll into balls, keeping each color and shade in a ball by itself. Pieces of narrow ribbon, old cravats and sashes, old waists of dresses—in fact, every scrap of silk—can be made of use, whether soiled or fresh.”

When a sufficient number of balls has been made, a pound and a half of silk for every yard of material desired, they are sent to a carpet-weaver (unless it is preferred to crochet or knit them at home), who will do his part of the work for twenty-five or twenty-eight cents a yard. Three quarters of a yard is the width of his loom, and the amount required must be calculated accordingly. If careful directions are given him about arranging the colors, an Oriental looking material will be produced that is very effective.

The coloring of Roman scarfs is an excellent guide in the weaving of silk rags, and with large spaces of black and light blue, the effect will be very handsome. A material of this sort should be hung on rings, with little or no fullness, and it will be found more satisfactory for *portières* than for curtains. In the latter case there seems to be too much of it at once.

It would also be a very durable material for furniture covering, and any one with a propensity for sewing carpet-rags, and a goodly supply of silk scraps, might thus adorn a sofa or two.

Nor are carpet-rags proper worthy of the contempt into which they have fallen, for many are the uses to which this simple work can be put. Sewing carpet-rags is an occupation very generally liked by children and adopted by the aged, and in economical households it is one that, in some shape or other, is usually on hand. The materials may be finer or more humble, but carpet-rags it is, by whatever name it may happen to be called.

Rag carpets even may be made very pretty, and the

effect produced by an abundance of white rags with about half the quantity of scarlet, and an edging to the stripes of black, is something wonderful. Or, with a little extra trouble, each color can be pieced and bound by itself to be arranged in contrasting stripes ; or queer little squares can be formed that have a sort of dingy-æsthetic look.

The only skill required for carpet-rags is to cut them with some degree of evenness and to join the ends strongly, lapping one well over another. The same proportion in weight is required as for silk rags.

Rag carpets are not always made in solitude or in quiet ; many a merry party has assembled over carpet-rags where numerous fingers made light work, and the kitchen of the parsonage or the dining-room of the hospital was benefited by the result. A carpet-rag "bee" is a pleasant gathering, suggestive of all sorts of country enjoyments.

Mats and rugs, beautiful as well as serviceable, can be produced from the contents of many a rag-bag assorted and combined by skillful fingers. The waste odds and ends of silk, treated as for carpet-rags, may be woven, knitted, or sewed into Oriental devices and combinations of color that well repay the comparatively slight labor bestowed upon them, and look remarkably well when the same material is used in the room for some other purpose. A fringe of the same narrow strips is a very suitable finish.

Odds and ends of all kinds come in very nicely for ordinary rugs, and with the aid of the home needle these can be utilized in a variety of ways. The woollen pieces are especially desirable, and these may be cut in strips an inch wide and about three inches long, and sewed closely either in a pattern or at random on some coarse foundation. The middle of each strip is stitched on the foundation close to the last one, and the ends stand up. Strong linen thread is used, and when properly made it will be almost impossible to wear out such a mat.

Another style of rug equally strong, but involving more labor, is made of carpet-rags with the addition of carpet-ravelings and the aid of the needle and knitting-pins.

The odd pieces, which may be of all sorts of material, are cut on the bias, the thick ones being about half an inch wide and the thin ones two inches, and the edges pulled into rough ravelings. All are then loosely wound into balls of carefully assorted colors, having previously been sewed together like carpet-rags, and blocks are knitted, with large wooden needles, of twelve-inch squares. The blocks are then sewed together like patchwork, lined, and finished with fringe of the carpet-ravelings.

Children delight in this work, and, being a happy combination of patchwork and plain knitting in small pieces, to say nothing of the carpet-rag element, it is very convenient to pick up at odd moments.

The caterpillar rug is also made of the general contents of the rag-bag, cut on the bias, if possible, and strung on heavy linen thread. The strips are about an inch wide, and arranged without any regard to color, as everything is mixed up together in sewing on to the foundation. They are of uneven lengths, just as the goods will admit of being cut, and are run through the middle of the width and gathered closely together without sewing the ends. A piece of old carpet makes a good foundation, and the strips can be tacked on in lengths from end to end or turned around the corners. A bordering of black an eighth of a yard deep is a great improvement, and a square rug of this kind will be found very useful.

Another style, which is handsomer, but more work still, is made entirely of woollen goods in scraps an inch and a half square, which are strung through the middle on stout thread and sewn on a foundation. Very handsome materials can be introduced into this mat, as so little is required for each square.

Where two or three kinds of material are abundant a rug can be made in stripes (afghan fashion), separated by black braid on the seams and strongly stitched on the sewing-machine. A large center of diagonal stripes with a black or dark-colored border, or diagonal stripes in one corner and various other shapes for the remainder, is often very handsome.

Doing fancy work is often a comparatively easy matter to the proper making up of the articles after they are finished, and in making a sofa-cushion especially there are many things to be considered. It should be firm rather than soft, and the covering must fit it smoothly. To produce the latter effect, it is necessary to put between the pillow and the outside an interlining of something stiff; crinoline will answer the purpose very well.

Hair forms the best stuffing for a sofa-cushion; but if it is desirable to make use of a small pillow already on hand, this can be done by covering it with the stiffening before putting on the outside. The latter should be adjusted by careful measurement, allowing just enough over for the pillow to slip into it neatly. Sometimes both ends are left open until the case is on, but these finishing stitches have to be put in with great care, and the corners watched lest there should be inequality. Miranda can ornament the outside very satisfactorily, but it is to the patient, plodding hands of Sarah Jane that we would intrust the making up.

Some home needles are unconscious of any fences or barriers, but trespass even upon the upholsterer's department with an airy freedom for which the apology lies in its results. Many a woman has re-covered a sofa or a chair, sometimes an entire set of furniture. This is by no means an impossible achievement for any needle-woman who can also hammer in tacks and work hard continuously; but unless one is obliged to do it, embroidering cat-tails or sun-flowers seems the more enjoyable task of the two.

If the old sofa or chair cover could be ripped off and an

exact pattern made from it, no difficulty need be found in cutting out another just like it, and, with the aid of a mattress-needle (taking long stitches on the under side), even the tuftings could be regularly followed. In addition to the renovated furniture, there will probably be an aching back ; but then, what would you ?—the upholsterer will have been defrauded of his unjust dues.

Slip-covers, for protecting the furniture in summer, are comparatively easy to make at home, and if there is a worn-out set for patterns, it is only a question of cutting and stitching. Neat sewing and exact measurements show to great advantage here, and produce covers that give the room an attractive air, even when the glories of plush and raw silk are hidden from view.

Rainy days are a boon to the housekeeper with a view to executing various pieces of work that will not brook interruption. One of these odd jobs is connected with feathers, which have an uncanny propensity for flying long after they have been detached from the body that gave them life ; and the making of pillows is an occupation that necessitates retirement into strictly private life. This work is not often undertaken except in the country, or where the making of two small pillows into one large one, or *vice versa*, is suddenly required ; but it is well to know *how* to do it in case of emergency.

Square pillows are not made quite square ; for one of goodly proportions, twenty-eight by thirty-two inches is considered the proper proportion. About five pounds of *best* feathers, and seven of an inferior quality, will fill this case comfortably. A double row of stitching is necessary to strengthen the seams, for the volatile property of feathers enables them to obtrude themselves upon the world again through the slightest approach to an opening in their prisons. Flying feathers whenever a pillow is beaten up are an unmitigated nuisance.

An opening of not quite three eighths of a yard is left either in the middle or at the end of one of the seams for filling the pillow, and this is accomplished with less fuss and feathers, if the corresponding opening in the case from which the latter are taken is closely basted to the opening of the new case, side to side, until a sufficient quantity have been pressed in. Very few can escape by using this method ; but if the feathers are emptied in like ordinary merchandise, the dress, nostrils, and hair of the operator will suffer from the intensely clinging nature of the separated particles.

Before ripping the two cases apart the sides of each should be basted together at the edge ; then a very strong overhand seam of doubled thread will effectually secure the opening in the new pillow.

Turning sheets is also a favorite occupation for bad weather ; and sheets wear so much sooner in the middle than at the edges, that it will be found a great saving to change these positions. If of wide material, the sheet is cut down the center and the two selvage sides united by an overhand seam. The new sides are then finished with a narrow hem, after taking off any very thin portions that would soon wear through.

When two widths of material have been used, they are ripped apart, and the two opposite edges sewed together. No hemming is then required, unless the sheet has been worn thin. By this method a much-worn double sheet can often be converted into a very good single one.

But there is a deal of simple magic to be evoked from the home needle and the home work-basket, and the capacious depths of the latter should accommodate all the "modern conveniences," and look well built, roomy, and substantial, with some regard to outside appearances, and a general air of being in order and ready for the next thing, whatever it may chance to be.

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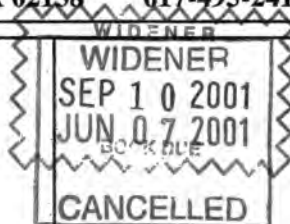
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